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INTRIGUERS

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THE INTRIGUERS





# THE INTRIGUERS

*A NOVEL*

BY  
JOHN D. BARRY



NEW YORK  
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY  
1896

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## THE INTRIGUERS.

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### I.

THIS year Harrington Boyd had gone abroad in May and returned early in July. The two weeks in Newport that followed bored him so much that when he ran up to Boston to see the Norths, who had a cottage at Magnolia, he resolved not to go back there. The Norths worried him for a week; so, by means of a plausible fiction about being obliged to return to New York to confer with his publishers, he escaped from their clutches. For he found that to be with the Norths was really to be *in* their clutches. They paraded him incessantly, till he grew tired of his literary reputation and of himself, an experience he had never had before. Jack North, whom he had known at Columbia—the Norths had drifted from New York to Boston by the irony of business—Jack was a good fellow, but his widowed mother and his unwedded sister were persistent and pitiless

celebrity-hunters. Harrington Boyd was so accustomed to using other people that he found being used extremely tiresome. It was therefore with a delicious sense of relief that he stood, on the afternoon of the 1st of August, alone in the streets of Boston. He had just left Jack, with the remark that he should take the six o'clock train for New York, and with some difficulty had persuaded him not to wait to see him off.

Boston always amused Harrington Boyd. He had been taught to look at it from the point of view of New York, which, so far as it relates to other American cities, is invariably humorous. He knew it chiefly through the Norths, whose uncertain social position there afforded him secret delight. It was clever of the Bostonians to see through Mrs. North, he thought, and it was delightfully snobbish of them to patronize her, to accept her on sufferance, as it were; for, in spite of her ambitions and her *moves*, she was a Knickerbocker of Knickerbockers, a Van Rensselaer on one side and a Schermerhorn on the other. However, notwithstanding their little conceits and foibles and their large sympathy for those not born in their city, Boyd liked the Bosto-

nians. It occurred to him that it would be pleasant to be alone in Boston for a while ; he could enjoy the place, and he could also have a delicious sense of freedom from the Norths, spiced with the danger of being near them, but not with them.

So he stayed in Boston for two days, prowling and deriving an almost childish pleasure from the risk that he ran of encountering Jack North and being branded as a liar. Then he found the town hot, and he resolved to take a "trip down the harbour." Every one in Boston, he had heard, took "trips down the harbour." One of the simple joys of the travelled Boston mind lay in pointing out the superiority of Boston harbour to the harbour of New York, which to Harrington Boyd seemed a wholly fatuous proceeding. However, as he had never seen Boston harbour before, he tried to view it without bias, and, in spite of being hustled and jostled on one of the morning boats, he liked it. The crowd drove him from the boat at Hull. He lunched at the Pemberton Hotel, smoked a cigar on the piazza, surrounded on three sides by the sea, that sent a cool breeze across his face, and he declared the spot delightful.



A moment later he looked up and saw a tall, handsome girl walking along the piazza. Her carriage, the pose of her head, the outline of her face and figure, struck him as uncommon. She was walking aimlessly, apparently because she was too restless to sit. When she reached the end of the piazza he saw her face. He threw his cigar away, looked across the water, and said to himself: "By Jove, I'll stay here! I can work here as well as anywhere else—better. Why not?"

Harrington Boyd was not a man of quick resolves. He believed, however, there were times when resolution was the highest of qualities; this was one of them. For a month he had been nervous, unable to work. He felt sure that he could write here; he would take the coolest room in the house, where there was no sun in the morning. The afternoons and evenings he would have for recreation and investigation. Once before he had met a subject like this girl; the moment he saw her he had recognised her value. It was at Bar Harbor, early in the season, just as he was about to leave because he found it dull, barren of material; but there he had had so many obstacles to contend with, so many distractions. Here

it would be different; there were evidently few people at the hotel; the men, of course, went to business in Boston every day. He should have her all to himself.

He knew he was doing the eccentric thing, but he had done it so successfully before that he felt no hesitancy now. Besides, he could afford to be eccentric. With him literature was a game—as much of a game, though in a different way, as it was to his friend Mrs. Follett Ladd, who pretended to be literary, and surrounded herself with writers, because, as she said, they “amused” her. Mrs. Ladd was rich, and she wanted to write, but she couldn’t. Harrington Boyd was rich, and he had always determined to write; he knew that his literary gifts were few, but he had read somewhere that by persistent endeavour one might become an author. So at Columbia he had worked, to the amusement of his friends, who never suspected his motive; then he passed three years in Paris, studying the methods of the French short-story writers. On his return to New York he gravely announced that he was about to begin a literary career. His father, who was himself in good practice, had hoped to make a lawyer of him, but his mother was pleased that he had turned

in disgust from the musty law books she had always been jealous of.

For a year after his return nothing appeared from his pen; but it was generally understood that he was about to do something fine. Mrs. Follett Ladd proclaimed her faith in him at many a ball and afternoon tea. It was reported that Mrs. Ladd had advised him to "cut up society." In his first published story he did cut up society mercilessly. It had been extensively advertised; he himself had been boomed as the young society man who was entering literature, apparently to help it along; and when the narrative appeared it was talked of for a week, and Harrington Boyd was made. It was a curious instance of extrinsic success, for the work itself was tawdry, imitative, and feeble in character-drawing. Harrington Boyd's cynicism passed for wit, his stilted English for style, his misinterpretation of motive for subtle analysis. Women praised him so much that he ignored what impartial critics said of him; so he made no effort to correct his faults. His short stories were collected in volumes, and his first novel, made of material gleaned at Bar Harbor, was so cynical and pitiless in its dissection of a girl's character



displayed in a love affair that it created a sensation.

It was of Bar Harbor that he was thinking when he decided to remain in Hull; he had a delightfully complacent feeling at the thought of possibly repeating his experience there. That had been one of the things worth living for. But to Bar Harbor he had gone deliberately, at the suggestion of Mrs. Follett Ladd, who lived there and had urged him to come. This little place, however, would have the charm of the unexpected; it reminded him of towns in Europe where he had stayed for weeks, simply because they pleased him. As he sauntered into the office of the hotel to engage a room and to send a telephone message to Boston for his traps, he smiled at the thought of the prospect.

## II.

PEOPLE who met Dorothea Wayne marvelled when they heard that she lived in Oswego. "But she's probably been abroad a good deal," they said, in justification of their judgment. When they were told she had never been abroad, they fell back on New York, which serves to explain so many mysteries. No, she had never lived in New York. Her manner was not a fashionable boarding-school acquirement; it was simply the expression of herself.

Any one could see she was a fine creature. She showed that in her face, in her regular features, her large, dark eyes with long lashes, in her graceful figure, her splendid carriage. Aleck French, the young Oswego illustrator, had introduced her in so many of his drawings for the pictorial weeklies that he was often accused of being limited in types. Perhaps this was why she had urged him to go to Paris,

where he might work out of the rut he had fallen into, and incidentally learn to paint. She was always planning for others. Her friends, when asked about her, used to declare that this was why she hadn't done more for herself. They were also likely to make invidious reference to the girl's invalid mother, who, they said, "dragged her down."

Of course, Dorothea ought to have married long before she reached her twenty-eighth year. Yes, she was only twenty-eight, though she might be mistaken for a perfectly preserved woman of thirty-five. She might pose as a tragic figure; yet the expression of her face was usually gentle. Her disposition was gentle enough—that is, those who knew her liked to assert this about her. Those who didn't know her were afraid of her. She was too stately for the ordinary uses of social life. One never could deal in badinage with *her*; she would open wide her eyes at the first jest, and the trifler would experience a spiritual collapse. It was wonderful, the effect she could produce by opening her eyes.

To Oswego she was a blessing; she provided it with a topic. Her father had been in business there for many years. When he died

Dorothea was twenty, and preparing to go abroad with him. People expected her to go just the same, and to take her mother in her father's place; but she stayed at home and took lessons in sketching from Aleck French. Her mother was too frail to travel. Besides, Mrs. Wayne loved Oswego, where she had lived her long romance, with the selfishness of people who cling to the memory of happiness; so she bound her daughter to wearisome associations.

Oswego expected Dorothea Wayne to marry Aleck French. Aleck's father was rich, and Aleck had made a reputation and an income by his illustrations. When it was discovered that he was going to Paris, Oswego prepared itself for the announcement of the engagement. Since then two years had passed, and Oswego still waited. It was vexing. Dorothea never explained whether she had refused him before he sailed, or whether she had accepted him since his success with his first *Salon* picture. As for Mrs. Wayne, she would have been glad to explain if she could; but her fondness for explaining had silenced her daughter many years before. At times Dorothea's silence in her mother's presence was positively dramatic. It used to appal the faded widow, whose chief pleasure



consisted in the minute discussion of the affairs of her family and her neighbours.

Indeed, for all her virtues Dorothea was a great trial to her mother. If she would only rebel against Fate, the widow used to say to her little circle of Oswego matrons, if she would only speak out now and then, she would be far less wearing on the nerves; but there was something dreadful in her passive acquiescence, in her tragic serenity. To her intimates Mrs. Wayne used to whisper that Dorothea had treated Aleck French shamefully. She still corresponded with him, however; she herself had never read any of his letters, but they were frequent, and from the appearance of the envelope she knew they were long. If Dorothea didn't care for Aleck French, then she cared for no one else in the world. He was the only man she hadn't treated with an icy reserve. What could the girl be thinking of—throwing her youth away? With her beauty and her presence she might aspire to anything. Mrs. Wayne was always referring to her daughter's "presence," an inheritance from paternal ancestors.

As for Dorothea herself, she knew of the agitation that she caused her mother, but she

tried to regard it philosophically. When her father died, she lost the companion of her life. They were like two comrades; they read the same books, thought many of the same thoughts, understood and sympathized with each other. For many years Mrs. Wayne had been to her husband only a clinging dependency; but this she never realized; so she was saved from that most cruel of emotions, maternal jealousy. He treated her with as much consideration as a mother treats a sick child, and his example had stimulated his daughter to do likewise.

So Dorothea sacrificed her ambitions, dwelt in Oswego, and pursued her studies. She went deep into history and art and literature. For a year after her father's death she tried writing; he had often urged her to write, but she had held off from the attempt through sheer doubt of her capacity. At first she threw herself into the work with a passionate vehemence; but her essays and her stories came persistently back from the editors, and she finally burned them all and closed a chapter in her life. It was a disappointment; but she had too much good sense to brood over it, and she went at her reading and her sketching harder than ever.

It was then that her intimacy with Aleck

French began. She had known him as a boy, but they had seen little of each other during his four years at Cornell, where his father had sent him with the hope of curing him of his fondness for art. After graduation, however, Aleck came home and devoted himself to drawing more assiduously than he had done before. It was his struggle with his father and his hatred of Oswego that first interested Dorothea in him. When, after two years, his work found acceptance, and his father acquiesced in his choice of a profession, and he might have gone to New York, he preferred to remain in Oswego. Of course the Oswego people knew why ; he made no secret of his infatuation. They didn't know, however, why he left for Paris so cheerfully. No one but himself and one other person knew that Dorothea Wayne had promised to tell him at the end of two years whether she could care for him enough to marry him. He had made up his mind to win her by hard work, and he asked nothing more than the chance of making himself worthy of her. There was something almost touching in his devotion ; she felt that, but she was afraid of the feeling ; it was too fragile a foundation for a life union.

Dorothea Wayne had very definite ideas

about marriage—far more definite than her ideas about life in general. She had loved her father so intensely that she never dared to speak of him, and she was always gauging other men by him. There were qualities in Aleck French that she admired : his devotion to his work, his freedom from vulgarity, his almost childlike truth, his rugged simplicity. Sometimes, however, this very simplicity disturbed her ; she would have liked a little guile. His lack of polish—his hands were big, his shoulders drooped, and when he walked he slouched—seemed so inconsistent with his genuine feeling for art and his skill in delineating the finer phases of life. Then, too, there were times when fearful silences would rise up between them, when her mind would go into worlds where he couldn't follow. In spite of his training at college, he cared little for books, and his knowledge of the history of art and of art-theories was shockingly meagre. She had hoped that Paris would give him polish ; but his letters showed that he was still very American, still simple, as he had always been. Sometimes, however, this pleased her ; if she had found in him the change she was always looking for she would have been displeased.



In September the two years would be over. As the time approached Dorothea grew more and more nervous. Her mother, too, suffered an increase in her ailments, and the doctor prescribed sea air in a quiet spot on the New England coast. Dorothea at once thought of Boston. Her father had lived there for the first twenty years of his life and had always loved it. They could find the quiet spot near the city. At any rate, they might look for one, and, if they couldn't find what they wanted, they might try the Maine coast. Perhaps the Griffins, Mrs. Wayne's kindred, who lived in Brookline, could tell them of a place. Mrs. Griffin took them in for a season and then sent them down to Hull. The place pleased Dorothea; she would have time to think there, and she could be alone. So, early in July they engaged rooms at the Pemberton for the rest of the summer.

Mrs. Wayne found a few old ladies with whom she could gossip and discuss her daughter's peculiarities, and explain how marvellously she resembled her father. Dorothea devoted herself to reading and to long walks along the beach toward Nantasket, and to exploring the picturesque spots in the little town of Hull. She often sat for hours on the beach, looking

out on the sea toward Boston Light, thinking. It seemed hideous to her that she should be obliged to decide her future in so cold-blooded a way. A thousand times she told herself that, in spite of his crudeness, she liked Aleck French; then she was obliged to acknowledge that she could live without him, that even if he were taken out of her life she should still be interested in the world. Ah! that was the pity of it; things appealed to her mind rather than her heart.

Sometimes she wondered if she could really love any one. Then she thought of her father, and realized that she did have some feeling; but her love for him was as much the love that comes from congenial companionship as the natural affection of child for parent. There were moments when she felt as if her emotions had gone to sleep, as if something ought to happen to wake them up. Whenever she reached this conclusion she laughed, and jumped from her seat and walked vigorously. She had been walking vigorously the day that Harrington Boyd saw her sauntering along the hotel piazza.

### III.

It was the second week of September, yet Harrington Boyd was still in Hull. His New York friends, most of whom had gone to Lenox or Stockbridge or Tuxedo, were wondering what had become of him. Mrs. Follett Ladd hadn't heard from him since his flight from the Norths six weeks before; but she intimated slyly to her friends that she knew all about him; he was producing a wonderful piece of work in his hiding place. Secretly she was vexed; of course, she knew he was having another "experience." He had kept her informed of the progress of the Bar Harbor episode, and afterward, in New York, she had called and "pumped" the girl, as she said in her elegant phraseology. Since his first literary success she had regarded him as her property; she liked people to think that she was responsible for him, that she had really made him. Harrington Boyd knew of this ambition, and it tic-

kled his vanity ; it was a precious tribute to his power.

Boyd's six weeks at Hull had interested him ; yet the experience was different from what he had expected. In the first place, he found it surprisingly difficult to make acquaintance with the beauty who had bound him to the spot. Dorothea Wayne manifested a baffling desire to be let alone ; but he persisted and he was rewarded, for she proved to be all he had hoped of her and more.

She seemed to him a unique and deliciously paradoxical combination of qualities. A woman of the world, she had the ideals of a school-girl ; yet, in spite of her romances, he felt sure she had never been in love. He called her a "modern Galatea," and he thought seriously of writing a novel about her with this term for title. When she frankly confessed that she had never seen anything of his, he gave her his books to read, and the incisiveness of her comments delighted him. He liked to think of her keen intelligence under the inspiration of love ; he wondered if the result would be an abasement or an exaltation. He hardly dared confess to himself that he wished to see the queenly figure at his feet ; it would be magnificent to



unlock the secrets of that proud heart, to throw open the enchanting realms of emotion to that cold perfection.

During the morning hours he worked; they read together in the afternoon, and in the evening they roamed the beach. Of course, the other boarders in the house had them engaged in a week, and Mrs. Wayne spent many happy hours in denying the report. She did her best to conceal from her daughter her delight at the possibility of an engagement; she knew it would lead to an immediate renewal of the Oswego life, which for the moment had lost charm for her.

It may have been that Dorothea was too unsophisticated to be conscious of the gossip; at any rate, she betrayed no suspicion of it. She would have been willing to stay on in Hull for another month if the cold weather hadn't driven her mother into a bundle of shawls, and warned her that summer was over. So one frigid Tuesday they decided to leave on the following Saturday.

On Thursday the fickle September weather changed; Mrs. Wayne emerged from her shawls, and Dorothea was almost persuaded that July had returned. The night before their depart-

ure, while her mother was absorbed in packing her belongings, Dorothea walked with Harrington Boyd along the beach and up the steep Telegraph Hill that looked out on the harbour, twinkling with lights from the opposite shore. The evening was warm from the day's heat, but a cool breeze blew across the hill. For a few moments they sat in silence on the greensward; Harrington Boyd began to beat the grass gently with his heavy stick.

"How pleasant it is to sit here! This is a fine place. It's hard to find the country and the seashore combined, isn't it?"

She nodded, and he went on:

"You get just a touch of the country here, and it makes a contrast with the sea. When I go to the country I always miss the sea, and when I go to the sea I grow tired of that, too. I'm not easy to satisfy, I suppose."

"One always tires of monotony," she replied, looking out across the harbour.

"But you don't find life monotonous, do you?"

"Oh, no!"

"It seems to me I never knew any one so full of life as you are."

She made no reply.

"Yet you're restful, too. You seem to me like *Imogen*, in my first long story, you know. *Imogen* was just the creation of my imagination, an ideal. Now I don't dare trust my hand at anything but realities."

"You mean that you study real people and put them into your books?" she asked, without turning her head.

"Well, not exactly, and yet that's practically what I mean. I seldom take a character from life and work it into a story without changing it. I did do that, however, in the case of *Tom Weatherby* in *Fashionable Folly*, and *Mabel Granger* in *Dishonour* was as nearly like a girl I met at Bar Harbor three summers ago as I could make her."

"How did she take it?"

"Oh, *that* was funny. She didn't *take* it at all. I mean she didn't catch on; she never suspected she had sat for the character. In fact, she abused it to Mrs. Follett Ladd. I had asked Mrs. Ladd to call on her while she was in New York."

"How flattering!"

"Yes, wasn't it? But I remembered the old proverb about seeing ourselves, you know."

"Did you write the story while you were there—at Bar Harbor?"

"Oh, no! I wrote it when I got back to New York. I didn't write that summer, but I took notes, oceans of notes; I'm an inveterate note-taker. Some day I'll show you my notebook. I've got piles of them."

"And when the story was published you sent it to her, and she wrote to you about it?"

"Exactly. And an awful raking she gave it, too. By Jove, how she did go for it! She even called names. She said it was vulgar—that the tone was vulgar. Mrs. Ladd told me all about it."

"What did she say about *Mabel Granger*?"

"In her letter, do you mean? She devoted several pages to *Mabel*. It was very funny. I thought the character would make her mad, but it didn't; it seemed to pain her. That was about as good. The thing for a novelist to do is to arouse *some* emotion, it doesn't matter what. She said I hadn't been fair in my analysis of *Mabel*, that I had put the interpretation of a cynical man of the world on the actions and character of a fine womanly nature—some such phrase as that, like an amateurish book review."

"Poor girl!" she said.

"Poor?" he repeated, with a laugh. "Far from it. She isn't in need of sympathy. She



can take care of herself. Besides, she's married now. She's done just as my *Mabel* did. She gave up her silly ideals, and instead of marrying a poet, or a painter, or a Salvation Army captain, she accepted a good, sensible business man; he's in the iron business, I think. She sent me cards."

"The *Mabel* in your book wouldn't have sent the cards," she said quickly.

"Oh, yes, she would. It would have been revenge."

She turned her face toward him. "Then you gave her reason to want revenge?"

"Aren't you mixing the two *Mabels* up?" he asked with a little smile.

Their eyes met, and she dropped hers.

"Perhaps I am," she replied. "But I thought your *Mabel* was taken from life."

"So she was, but the circumstances were different. Besides, I didn't mean to draw myself when I drew *Austin Cobb*. He was a beast."

"Any man is who trifles with a girl's affections."

"A girl's affections!" he said mockingly. "It's hard to find out what they are. I sometimes think girls have substitutes for their affec-

tions—mere shams—that they bring out for everyday use.”

“Then you think *Mabel Granger's* affections weren't real?”

“Which Mabel, my *Mabel* or the Bar Harbor Mabel? You see, you've confused them in my mind.”

“It doesn't make any difference, does it? Their affections were the same. Their only difference was in their surroundings.”

“Oh, yes, of course. Do you know you make me think my *Mabel* must have been awfully real? It's very flattering.”

“Oh, she's real enough—too real. I've thought about her a great deal. But you haven't answered my question—about *Mabel's* affections.”

“Oh, *they* were sham, pure sham.”

“Ah!” Then, after a moment, she said, “And didn't she have *any* real ones?”

“Oh, yes; but she kept them down. In my story she makes herself ill over that miserable *Cobb*. But that was because he had taken advantage, led her on, you know, just for the fun of the thing. But he was a bungler. The Bar Harbor Mabel got over her shams, her painted ideals, poor girl! She's given her real affections to her iron merchant.”

"But didn't *she* have any Cobb?"

"She had plenty of admirers—scores—from the little college boys off on their vacations to literary bachelors like myself. She was a great flirt."

"Was she? I didn't think so."

"At heart, at heart, she was a flirt. She played a deep game."

She made a motion to rise.

"Do you know," he said quickly, "this has been the pleasantest and the most unsatisfactory summer of my life?"

"The most unsatisfactory?"

"The most incomplete. It has ended too abruptly—like a story that isn't properly developed. I want another month of it."

"Oh—for more observations?"

"Another month with you, I mean. I haven't seen enough of you. You're going away too soon."

"You mean that my departure is inartistic? I'm sorry. But you must forgive me. You know I only live in Oswego."

"You could live anywhere, for that matter. You belong to the world."

"I'm afraid you're trying to make amends at the last moment for chaffing me about my little

town," said Dorothea, with a faint smile that his sharp eyes detected in spite of the darkness.

"Not in the least. I love your little town. It must be a paradise."

"If you keep on you'll spoil your professional reputation."

"You are chaffing *me* now. But we shall meet—this winter in New York."

"I'm afraid not," she replied.

"What! Why, you told me you were coming, and we've been talking about it all summer."

"I've changed my mind."

"Changed your mind?"

"Yes."

"And yet you tell me this as if you thought I didn't care."

"Why should I think you did care?" Her voice was so low that, but for the distinctness of her speech, he would not have been able to hear the words.

"Because I have given you every reason to think so," he answered, warmly.

"You gave *Mabel Granger* every reason to think you wanted to see her again."

"*Mabel Granger*! What do you mean?"

"I think you understand what I mean."



"I am sure I do not."

"Then I'm afraid you lack some of those intuitions you spoke of a little while ago."

There was a curious little upward inflection of her voice that he could not interpret.

"I wish you'd explain what you do mean."

"I mean that by your own confession you have drawn *Mabel Granger* from life, and you couldn't have described her as you have unless you yourself played the part that *Austin Cobb* played."

"In other words," he said slowly, turning to her, "you think that I am *Austin Cobb*."

"I don't say that. But I do say that many of your traits are *Austin Cobb's* traits, and your attitude toward women is exactly like his."

"Miss Wayne," he cried, "you——"

She went on as if she hadn't heard him: "I know you think a woman is too dull to see into the working of a clever man's mind. But I saw how you had insinuated yourself into that girl's confidence because she admired you, and how she told you her poor little ideas about life. And you made game of her for your own glory."

He sprang to his feet.

"You are unjust to me, Miss Wayne!"

She rose, too, and they stood facing each other on the top of the hill.

"I should be unjust," she replied, quietly, "if I said these things thoughtlessly. But you yourself have given me a thousand proofs of them ever since I've known you, by what you have said, by your attitude toward me, and toward all women, for that matter."

"Oh, you're too severe," he said, trying to turn the scene into a jest. "You really are."

"If I have misjudged you, I——"

"I know you mean to be just, and I admire you for it. You have never seemed to me so fine as you are now. You almost make me doubt my principles."

"Your principles?"

"Yes, I have principles, though you apparently don't believe in them. And I have feelings, too. Oh, I know what you think of me. You've made the old mistake of confusing me with the characters I've created. You forget that I try to reproduce life as I see it. If the world isn't good, I'm not to blame. I didn't make it."

"The world is good enough. It's your point of view I object to."

"My point of view?"

"Yes, your way of looking at things—of looking at women."

"I hope my way of looking at one woman doesn't displease you, and it doesn't change in spite of her indifference to me or in spite of her misinterpretation of my character."

"You are magnanimous," she said, with a smile.

"No, I'm not. I'm just human and sincere, and I'm going to prove it. I didn't intend to speak—I confess that. I didn't know myself—I didn't know you—till a moment ago. And now all you say makes me see how precious you are to me and how cruel it is that you should misjudge me. The thought that you may pass out of my life makes it seem worthless. I can't let you go that way. I can't let you go without an understanding."

"I think I understand you."

"You don't understand that I love you," he cried, vehemently, "or you wouldn't talk to me as you've just done."

"I'm sorry you have said that. But let us go back to the hotel and forget all about it."

"Forget all about it? Is that the way you treat a man who offers you all he has? Yet *you* talk of women's hearts."

"It's because I am a woman that I want to spare you. But you mustn't offer me anything. It's impossible."

"Why is it impossible?"

"Because it is."

"That means you care for some one else, doesn't it?"

For a moment she was silent. Then she replied, "Perhaps."

He looked at her without speaking as she stood silhouetted against the darkness.

"Are you engaged?" he said at last.

She met his look frankly. "Yes."

"May I ask who it is? Is that a secret, too?"

"His name is Alexander French."

"French, the painter? The man that got a medal over in Paris last spring?"

"Yes."

"I should like to congratulate him," he said slowly.

"We really must go back to the hotel."

#### IV.

AFTERWARD Dorothea wondered how she had reached the hotel that night. She remembered that as soon as her first sense of elation had passed—she was ashamed of it now—she became so embarrassed that she could hardly reply to Harrington Boyd's remarks. These were few enough; his commonplaces seemed to have deserted him. As they stepped on the piazza she saw her mother conversing busily with her group of matrons, all of whom cast glances at herself and Harrington Boyd. Her suspicions were confirmed when the invalid followed her at once to her room.

“Well, have you accepted him?”

Dorothea turned and glanced at her mother. Her vigorous form towered above the frail figure; her face was pale, she had never looked more stately, and the invalid inwardly quailed.

“Accepted him? What do you mean, mother?”



"Why, Mr. Boyd. I could tell from your looks that *something* had happened."

"I have accepted Aleck French, mother," said Dorothea, turning away and lifting her arms to unpin her hat.

"Aleck French!" Mrs. Wayne wailed. The wail was due simply to her disappointment, not to any objection in her mind to Aleck French. She had always liked Aleck, and the little confidences between them about Dorothea had strengthened the liking. But Harrington Boyd's fame and social position and his reputed wealth had dazzled her; he, of all the men she knew, could provide the most suitable niche for her statuesque daughter. Besides, the matrons on the piazza were at this moment waiting for her to reappear and announce the engagement; they would naturally resent their disappointment, and they would be shocked to hear that Dorothea was engaged to some one else. Of course, they knew all about Aleck French, for Mrs. Wayne never wearied of revealing to sympathetic listeners the ardour of his devotion. They would think it strange that a mother should know so little about her child's most vital relations; it would be a distinct reflection on herself.

These considerations flashed through Mrs. Wayne's mind as she confronted the shapely outlines of her daughter's back. In contrast with the girl's poise she seemed particularly helpless. She wanted to ask a multitude of questions, but the seething tumult of her thoughts formulated itself into one only.

"When did you accept him?" she finally asked, with a curious mixture of curiosity and despair in her face and tone.

"To-day, mother; I accepted him to-day," Dorothea replied in the patient manner of one answering the question of a child. She was unconscious of this manner toward her mother; if she had known of it, she would have changed it. It was the insidious expression of years of repressed vexation.

Mrs. Wayne wanted to ask about Harrington Boyd, but that tone made her nervous and she forbore. She couldn't resist the temptation, however, to beat about the bush. With Dorothea she was always doing this, to the added annoyance of the girl, who hated dodging. In spite of their love, mother and daughter were a great trial to each other.

"Have you said good-bye to Mr. Boyd?" the invalid asked.

"Yes," Dorothea replied, twisting a curl before the mirror, and wishing that her face didn't look so flushed. The word had dropped mechanically from her lips, and she realized only after she spoke that it was not true. But she did not feel bound to recall it; with her mother she often relaxed her rigid moral code.

"Some of the ladies think he's in love with you," Mrs. Wayne ventured, standing stock-still in the middle of the room with the pained look in her face. She had not as yet accustomed herself to Aleck French's new relation, and she was groping after a readjustment.

"I don't believe that he could be in love with any one," said Dorothea carelessly, taking up a brush from the bureau and deftly touching her hair with it.

Mrs. Wayne turned away with a sigh at the realization that she could get nothing from the girl at that moment; but she consoled herself with the thought that she would resume the attack later. At the door, however, she asked, "When did you accept Aleck?" forgetting that the question had already been answered.

"To-day, mother."

The invalid walked back into the middle of

the room, and the look of pain in her eyes deepened.

"To-day?" she said once more.

"Yes, mother," Dorothea replied quietly, still trifling with her hair. "When he went away I promised to give him an answer in two years. The two years were up several weeks ago."

"Ah!" Those weeks opened a vista to Mrs. Wayne's romantic mind. Now she could interpret the girl's strange conduct to the matrons. She cast one of her helpless glances at her daughter, passed over her lips the lace handkerchief that she always carried in her belt, and started to say something. Then she changed her mind, and went out of the room, closing the door softly behind her.

Dorothea sat on the edge of the bed and remained there for a long time. She reviewed her conduct of the evening, and in the calm of her new mood she regretted the tone she had taken with Harrington Boyd. She recalled his remark about the novelist's arousing *some* emotion, no matter what it was. It was a poor satisfaction for her to know that she had aroused emotion in him. She had turned the tables on him for the time, but he would turn them back

on her by converting her silly little harangue into material for one of his stories. Even if she had in a sense avenged *Mabel Granger*, she was still *his* victim. Then she saw the humorous aspect of the situation, and she smiled in spite of her misery; for the complications of the day made her feel miserable, though she had hoped by her decisive action of the morning to put an end to her agitations.

Then her thoughts turned to Aleck French, and she blamed herself for having broken faith with him. He had expected her decision to reach him in Paris by the 1st of September; but he would not receive it at the earliest before the 5th or 6th of October. So for nearly five weeks he would be obliged to wait to hear from her, for in trying finally to make up her mind what to say she hadn't written to him at all. He might interpret her failure to write as a sign that their relations were at an end; in love affairs silence must often mean dissent. However, it was pleasing to think of his joy when at last he should receive her letter.

It was after ten o'clock when her mother returned to the room. Her busy manner convinced Dorothea that she had in mind a new plan. Indeed, Mrs. Wayne was greatly exhila-



rated by the interest and sympathy she had aroused in the matrons at the hotel. When they learned that Dorothea was not engaged to Harrington Boyd, the ladies, in delicious bursts of frankness, all confessed that they considered him a prig. This unanimous opinion completely restored Aleck to Mrs. Wayne's favour, and now she regarded her daughter's escape from the novelist as the interposition of Providence. Moreover, she had made arrangements to correspond with three of the matrons. In spite of her illness she maintained an extensive correspondence—among others, with people whom she had seen for a few days only, but in whose personal affairs she took a large, an almost impassioned interest.

"The expressman will be here at a quarter of eight, mother," said Dorothea, who always attended to the details of their travelling, "and we must be up at seven to leave by the early boat."

Mrs. Wayne hesitated a moment, apparently because she had not courage enough to plunge at once into what she was about to say. Then she blurted :

"I've changed my mind. I don't want to go back to Oswego to-morrow."

Dorothea turned and looked at her in surprise.

"Do you mean that you want to stay here, mother?"

"No, I don't," the invalid replied, with unwonted energy. "Mrs. Holbrook has invited us to spend a few days in Brookline with her. She's going to leave to-morrow morning, too. I thought——"

"I can't go to Mrs. Holbrook's, mother."

"But I promised just now——"

"We hardly know her. It would be an imposition. I've not exchanged ten words with her."

"Well, that's your own fault," Mrs. Wayne retorted, bridling. "If you're going to be so distant, you can't expect——"

"Of course, if you wish to go to Mrs. Holbrook's, you can, mother. I can go home and open the house."

Mrs. Wayne's next remark made Dorothea see that her first speech was only preliminary to another.

"I don't propose to let you do anything of the kind. If you go to Oswego I shall go, too; but I don't want to go yet. We see enough of the place in winter. We'll go back to the

Griffins for a few days. They'll be glad to have us. Then I can see Mrs. Holbrook."

"The Griffins don't know her," said Dorothea significantly.

"Well, I'll introduce them," Mrs. Wayne snapped.

Dorothea had no hesitancy in consenting to the plan. Mrs. Griffin was a distant cousin of her mother's, and the two women were fond of each other; besides, she liked Tom Griffin, who was in college, and just old enough to be companionable. Tom's flippancy and his assumed contempt for girls whom he was continually falling in love with amused her. The Griffins were always prepared for the descent upon them of their kindred, and Oswego rarely bothered them; so Dorothea felt sure of a welcome. She redirected the trunks, and after writing a letter to the housekeeper at home not to expect them for a week or two, she went to bed. There she thought over the Brookline plan, and found it agreeable. She was surprised that her mother was not eager to repair to Oswego and enjoy the felicity of making a personal announcement of the engagement; now and then, however, the invalid was almost startlingly inconsistent. Her friendship with

Mrs. Holbrook, a stout, well-appointed dowager of sixty, must have been unusually violent to cause the change in her plans.

The next morning they went to Brookline, where the unexpectedness of their visit won for them a warm welcome. Mrs. Wayne had not been in the house five minutes when the whole family knew that Dorothea was engaged, and half-stifled her with kisses. She wondered why these tributes of affection depressed her, and why they made her visit resentment on Aleck French. Then, as days passed and she heard nothing from him, her resentment increased. His last letter had reached her late in August; he had probably not written during September while waiting for her decision. He might have shown a little ardour. Then she had moments when she blamed herself for blaming him. As if he had not shown ardour enough already! In her most generous moods she felt humiliated at the thought of her own unworthiness of such homage as he paid her. His patience, which at first had seemed to her commonplace, then took on an almost sublime aspect.

Mrs. Wayne had planned to spend just a week at the Griffins', but she was beguiled into prolonging it into two. At the end of the first

week she tired of Mrs. Holbrook, who displayed too great persistence in calling; perhaps she had been prejudiced against her by the revelation Mrs. Griffin made of her social status in the wealthiest and the most beautiful of Boston's suburbs. At any rate, the friendship languished, as so many friendships made at watering places do. Before the second week had passed Mrs. Wayne lapsed into one of her periods of illness, took to her bed, and remained there for a month. This was a trial to Dorothea, because she feared that it was a trial to the Griffins, which it wasn't; for Mrs. Griffin was one of those women who love ministering to the sick. Dorothea, however, had a greater trial before her; it came in the shape of a letter from Aleck French:

“MY DEAR DOROTHEA: Your letter made me suffer more than anything that has ever happened to me. It made me realize what a fool I have been, and how terribly I am being punished. You are too good for me, anyway, and now I can see how presumptuous it was for me to think that you could ever be more than a friend to me. It nearly kills me to tell you what I have to tell, and the thought that I am



causing you unhappiness makes me feel that I am the greatest villain in the world. But I'll try to come out with it like a man, though I know you will despise me as soon as you read this. I can't keep my engagement with you, because I am married already. I married Olympe Deschamps just ten days before your letter reached me. For weeks I waited for a letter from you, and at last I thought it would never come; that you probably expected me to take your silence for a refusal, because you were too generous to give me pain. I got into a kind of frenzy, and I lost all hope of hearing from you, and one day I married her. I know I deserve your contempt, but I am really not worth even that. Good-bye. You will marry some one who is worthy of you, and that you may be happy will always be the wish of your faithful friend,

ALEXANDER FRENCH."

She was glad she had gone to her own room to read the letter. She hated to show feeling under any circumstances, especially in the presence of others. Her first thought was one of utter humiliation. To have been jilted by a man who had professed such affection for her that, in spite of her doubts, she had been per-

suaded that she cared for him ! Oh, the shame of it—the shame ! She bowed her head and covered her face with her hands, as if trying to hide from herself the hot flushes that sent the blood surging in her head. For a few moments she did not move or think ; she felt as if she were suffering from a paralysis. Then she tried to shake off the feeling, and rose from the chair and began to walk up and down in the little apartment. Her mortification speedily turned to indignation, and she felt a resentment against Aleck French that she had never supposed herself capable of feeling toward any one. Thoughts, suspicions, that in another mood would have shamed her, shot through her mind. He had been guilty of the most contemptible double-dealing with her, perhaps from the very beginning. While he was writing those letters from Paris, full of love and humility, he was devoting himself to that other woman ! Oh, the coward, the traitor !

It was not until she had considered the matter in all its bearings that she realized how utterly beneath herself she had always considered him. Now she saw that her interest in him had been largely one of pity, and sprang from a desire to help an inferior ; this was why she had mis-

trusted herself, why she had held off so long from the formal engagement. She was being punished. Perhaps she deserved it; perhaps such pride as hers needed the lesson. But it was very hard that the lesson should come from him. In the illumination which the shock gave her she saw what a mistake she had made, and she tried to escape from the consciousness of her own abasement by censuring herself. Then it flashed upon her that if she had not been bound to Aleck French until she wrote the letter accepting him, he had not been bound to her. But this technical escape from blame only made her visit her resentment on him again. She dreaded giving way to an explosion of tears, yet when she thought of the possibility this was just what she did do, and for half an hour she lay on the bed, sobbing convulsively.

## V.

THE tears did her good, and when the attack subsided, Dorothea felt equal to meeting her mother. She would tell her at once that the engagement was broken, and she would say nothing of Aleck's marriage. About the second point she hesitated before making her decision; concealment involved deceit, but she conceded the deceit to her pride; to that she believed she owed some consideration. When she looked at herself in the glass, however, she saw that her eyes were red and swollen. Even when she had deluged them with hot water, they betrayed her. So she decided to steal out and to take a long walk; by the time she returned she would look like herself again and be able to face her mother's scrutiny.

She walked for miles, far out into the country, hardly daring to allow herself to think, and hoping to bring on a healthy fatigue that would make her sleep that night. When she returned

it was nearly dinner time, and as she hurried up the stairs to her mother's room she was in a tumult of emotions; but she hid all outward expression of her feelings beneath her habitual reserve of manner.

Mrs. Wayne was sitting up in bed, reading a novel. On seeing Dorothea enter the room, she inserted her long, thin forefinger between the leaves and looked up with expectation in her drawn features. Her complexion, from confinement in the room, was even more sallow than usual. She divined her daughter's moods with wonderful keenness, and now, with a sense of mingled exultation and dread, she prepared herself for something dramatic.

Dorothea took a seat by the bedside, and looked into her mother's face.

"I've something to tell you," she said.

The invalid's fingers twitched.

"My engagement with Aleck is broken."

"Broken?" Mrs. Wayne repeated, with an incredulous gasp.

"Yes."

"Do you mean you've had a quarrel?"

"No, we haven't had a quarrel."

"What's the matter, then?"

"I can't tell you now, mother," Dorothea



replied, with the calmness that always threw her parent into despair. "Some time, perhaps, I will tell you."

"Is it that Mr. Boyd?"

Mrs. Wayne's faded eyes shone with acuteness. Her mind ran swiftly over the weeks at Hull, examining incident and incident to support her theory that Dorothea had transferred her affections from Aleck French to Harrington Boyd. In a flash she decided that Dorothea had accepted Aleck because she thought Harrington Boyd had been trifling with her; that last night at Hull, Boyd had proposed, and she had rejected him; then she had broken with Aleck, and, now that she was free, Harrington Boyd would come back. It was a perfectly logical sequence of events, and Mrs. Wayne felt a sudden desire to interpret it to Annetta Griffin.

For the present, however, she chose to dissemble. Her own lack of frankness made her suspicious of her daughter, and when Dorothea said, "No, mother, it is not Mr. Boyd," she attributed the speech simply to the girl's natural modesty.

For a moment they sat together without speaking. Then, "Don't you think you can

make it up?" Mrs. Wayne asked, for want of something better to say.

Dorothea shook her head.

"We shall never make it up. That is quite impossible."

This speech convinced the invalid that she was on the right scent; but she made no betrayal of her suspicions. She only said:

"It'll make a lot of talk in Oswego. It's been in the papers, you know."

Dorothea knew very well that it had been in the papers, for several marked copies of the notices had been sent to her. She waited for her mother to go on, and, after thinking for a space, the invalid cried, with more determination than she had shown since her illness:

"We can't go back there now. It would be too disagreeable for you."

"But we can't stay here," Dorothea said with equal determination.

"We might do as we thought of doing early in the summer—go to New York for a few weeks. We could get rooms in that place Miss Sloggett recommended to us."

"Yes," Dorothea agreed, dubiously, "we might do that." Then she added more decided-

ly, "It's the best thing we can do under the circumstances."

The invalid experienced a faint exultation at this further confirmation of her intuitions. She longed for a talk with Annetta Griffin, and when Dorothea finally left the room, she sent the maid for her friend.

Mrs. Griffin wept on hearing the news that was exclaimed to her as soon as she had closed the door behind her. She couldn't understand how Mrs. Wayne was able to take it so calmly. The explanation that was forthwith poured into her ears further mystified her. She had her own views about Dorothea's character.

"There's something behind it, my dear," she said impressively, at the end of the invalid's recital. "Just wait and see."

She had too much kindness and tact, however, to pry into Dorothea's affairs, and she said very little to the girl about the matter.

Mrs. Wayne improved rapidly, and in a fortnight she was able to leave for New York. There Dorothea felt a delicious sense of freedom. She entered the Art Students' League and devoted herself assiduously to drawing. Most of the students were younger than her-

self, but this did not trouble her; she had always felt much older than she really was, and she had become resigned to her age. Her work constantly reminded her of Aleck French, whom she tried not to think about; but she could not help wondering about his wife, what kind of woman she was and what kind of a life he led with her. She wondered, too, why she did not feel more bitterly toward him. After the convulsion that his letter had caused her, her resentment had gradually subsided, and now she suffered chiefly in the humiliation of her pride.

She tried heroically to hope that he was happy, and she even succeeded in convincing herself that if they were to meet again they would go on with their friendship. Sometimes this idea seemed so droll to her that she smiled at it. However, the standards of the world were not her standards, and if at any time she could do Aleck a service she resolved to do it. Indeed, the mere thought of this magnanimity on her own part greatly consoled her. It seemed to glorify her humiliation.

Mrs. Wayne found several spirits in the boarding-house who were eager to analyze her daughter with her. They coincided with her

views with regard to the girl's matrimonial prospects, and they were prepared any fine afternoon to see Harrington Boyd mount their brownstone steps. Indeed, the Misses Sophia and Millicent Marbury, whose youth and maturity had been largely devoted to readjusting the affairs of their acquaintances, spent many hours in their front room watching for him. They felt sure they should recognise him from Mrs. Wayne's vivid description.

It was Miss Millicent Marbury who discovered the item in the New York Chronicle announcing the marriage in Paris of Alexander French, the American artist, to Mlle. Deschamps, his model. She ran breathless to Mrs. Wayne's room, Miss Sophia trailing agitatedly behind her. Fortunately, Dorothea was at the League; when she returned to the boarding-house, and her mother confronted her with the item, she said that one of the League girls had already shown it to her. She was in the calm mood that her mother dreaded; so she escaped questioning.

In the conference in which Mrs. Wayne proceeded at once to engage with the Misses Marbury, these ladies expressed the unanimous opinion that the marriage was due directly to



Dorothea's refusal of Aleck. Miss Sophia cited from her own experience several cases of estimable young men who had been caught on the rebound.

For several days the sisters led a life of fluttering excitement in studying Dorothea's emotions as depicted in her face; they were prepared to find signs of regret, possibly of maidenly despair there; but even their rich imaginations were unable to discover any marked change in the girl's expression. She merely seemed more indifferent than usual.

About a week after the announcement of Aleck French's marriage appeared, "a lady with a manner" called at the boarding-house and asked for Miss Wayne; at any rate, this was the description given by the Misses Marbury, who saw her in the drawing room. She was tall and thin, and her rigid figure was encased in a suit of brown; her hat and her gloves were brown, and, though it was early November, she wore tan shoes. The Misses Marbury whispered to their intimates that in spite of her "manner" they thought she looked just a little—well, "showy"; she probably belonged to the "fast" set of New York society. When she

heard that Miss Wayne was not at home she asked for Miss Wayne's mother. The invalid slipped down the stairs in her flowing lace-trimmed gown and was closeted with her caller for an hour; then for another hour she was closeted with the Misses Marbury.

Just what was said during these conferences Dorothea never learned, though they both intimately concerned her welfare. Her mother told her simply that Mrs. Follett Ladd had called, that she was the most *fascinating* woman she had ever seen in her *life*, and she was so anxious to meet Dorothea that the call would be repeated in a few days. Mrs. Wayne was unable to interpret her daughter's stony displeasure on receiving this information, and the different explanations given by the Misses Marbury failed to satisfy her; moreover, when Mrs. Ladd called a second time she could not understand why Dorothea refused to see her. Under the circumstances, Mrs. Wayne was afraid to go down herself, and "the lady with a manner" was obliged to leave cards and depart without seeing any one save Miss Millicent Marbury, who happened to pass through the hall as she made her exit. She was herself seen, however, from an upper window by two pairs of eyes. Dor-

othea would hardly have been human if she had resisted her mother's invitation to catch a glimpse of the social leader; the vision was brief, but enough to deepen the prejudice she had already formed from report.

## VI.

THE Misses Marbury, who were always rising on the wings of prophecy, took a splendid flight during the two weeks that followed Mrs. Follett Ladd's call. Among other things they predicted the return of Harrington Boyd; Mrs. Ladd, they argued, on hearing of Mr. French's marriage, had come to see Dorothea in his behalf, and, as her mission had failed, he would come himself; a man of his sort always had a woman confidant. Though the Misses Marbury apparently belonged to no clearly defined social circle, they betrayed an intricate comprehension of the motives and habits of the old Knickerbocker and other sets of New York; this knowledge, they gave their friends to understand, was chiefly traditional, gleaned from an aunt who had been a belle many years before.

When, after several weeks, Harrington Boyd did not appear, they experienced a bitter disap-

pointment, and this they visited on Dorothea. In the privacy of their apartments they agreed that Dorothea was heartless, and that to have such a girl for a daughter was enough to break her mother down. Their treatment of Dorothea, however, continued to be, as it had always been, deprecatingly admiring; they paid her the playful homage that older women with no aspirations of their own often pay to girls with beauty. They really were afraid of her, but this they would not acknowledge even to each other, though with each other they were singularly gentle and truthful. Miss Millicent was five years younger than her sister; so Miss Sophia, who had brought her up since her tenth year, looked upon her as girlish, and was fond of excusing a certain giggling lightness in her on the plea of youth.

Dorothea found her work at the League more and more absorbing. Her teachers encouraged her, and one of them, Edgar Wentworth, became so interested in her that early in March he invited her to come and paint in his studio in the afternoons under his supervision. When she went there she found a dozen young women working at their easels, among them three from the League whom she knew.



"Let me see," the artist said. "I don't believe I want you to go into this class. For the present, anyway, I'll put you with Miss Flagler. Then I can watch your work more carefully. She's just going to begin on a new model, a middle-aged woman, and that will be good practice for you. You see, we're very Oriental here just at present—happened to have the costumes, you know."

She followed him through one of the smaller rooms, where a little, fair-complexioned lady was working on a portrait of a very wrinkled old woman, to another, where they found a young girl with jet-black hair, dark, liquid eyes, and full, red lips, sitting before a child of twelve and painting assiduously. Over her gown she wore a blue calico apron, and the thumb of her left hand in which she held her palette was stained with red and blue paint. As they entered, she held her brush in the air and looked at Dorothea with a good-humoured smile.

"Hasn't Miss Bogetta come in yet, Janet?" the artist asked.

"No," the girl replied lazily. "She's always late, you know."

"Yes, I must speak to her about that," he said, absently.—"Oh, this is Miss Flagler, Miss

Wayne, my wife's niece. I'll leave you two people to get acquainted.—I suppose you'll go on with this until Miss Bogetta comes, won't you?" he asked, glancing at Miss Flagler.

"Oh, I suppose so," the girl replied, with a yawn which she hid behind her hand. Then pointing to a chair beside her, she said to Dorothea: "Sit here, Miss Wayne, and see just how bad an artist I am."

"Have you studied long?" Dorothea asked, to keep up the conversation. Miss Flagler had a drooping manner; she seemed to be about to collapse at any moment.

"Six years," she replied, "ever since I was seventeen. Two years I studied in Paris. My father lived there. We took an apartment. New York is such a come-down after Paris."

"I suppose it is."

"Such nice artists there! I used to know some of the Americans; it's awfully hard to get acquainted with the French ones. I just adore the Quarter."

"Where did you study there?"

"At Julian's, principally. Then I had some private lessons from Alexander French. That

was before he got his medal; he was kind of hard up then."

So prolonged a silence followed this speech that Dorothea feared Miss Flagler would lift her eyes and read confusion in her face. She wanted to ask questions about Aleck French, but she did not dare. Miss Flagler presently relieved the tension by saying:

"Know French's work? I think it's lovely, don't you?"

"Yes; I like it very much."

"He's such a dear! I used to see a lot of him in Paris last year. I was so glad when he got the medal at the *Salon*! Funny about his marriage, wasn't it? I suppose you heard about that? They say he was in love with an American girl and she jilted him, and then he got married to a horrid French creature that used to pose to him."

"Have you ever seen her?" Dorothea asked, with a fine affectation of indifference.

"No; that was after I left Paris."

A few minutes later Miss Bogetta, a pretty young woman with a fresh complexion and dark eyes, appeared, and took the place of Miss Flagler's model. Dorothea began work at once, and during the sitting Miss Flagler had

very little to say. When it was over she examined Dorothea's work and burst into enraptured praise.

"It's really wonderful! How in the world did you get the character of the head so well? It's so spirited, too, and the composition is great. Where did you study?"

"I've studied very little," Dorothea replied.

"Here in New York? You haven't been abroad, have you?"

"No; I've only studied at home."

"Where's that?"

"In Oswego."

"Oswego? Why, that's where Mr. French comes from!"

"Yes, I studied with him," Dorothea said quietly.

"Then that explains it!" the girl cried, as if she had just had a revelation. "I knew I had seen your face before, but I couldn't make out where. I've been racking my brains ever since you came in. Why, I've seen your portrait dozens of times in Mr. French's studio. Then he has a lot of sketches of you. Well, isn't it strange?"

Dorothea turned to put on her wraps; she thought she could still feel Miss Flagler's eyes on her. Of course, she knew what the girl was

thinking of; but if Miss Flagler had any temptation to apologize for her remarks with regard to French's matrimonial experiences she resisted it. Dorothea felt ill at ease till she had left the studio and found herself in the bracing air again. Then she began to worry about the revelation she had made of her identity; Miss Flagler would probably tell all of Edgar Wentworth's pupils of her relations with Aleck. For a moment she thought of giving up her work at the studio, but she quickly decided that this would be foolish; she would simply ignore the matter. It was not likely that any of the girls would speak to her about it without encouragement; besides, Miss Flagler might be discreet enough to say nothing of her discovery.

For several days Miss Flagler did not mention French's name to Dorothea again. Then she apparently found it impossible to discuss their work without referring to French's methods, which Dorothea had unconsciously made her own. This led her to speak of the pictures he had exhibited in Paris and of his success there. It was a pity, she thought, that he had remained so conservative and had continued to send his things to the old *Salon*—the work in the *Champs de Mars* was so much better! How-



ever, everybody in Paris acknowledged his talent.

At first Dorothea had very little to say in reply to these remarks, but in spite of herself she was led on to talk about French, and in a short time Miss Flagler was giving a detailed account of the woman he had married and of the wretched life he was supposed to be leading with her. She thought the pity these revelations caused her was a proof that she had ceased to care for him except as a friend.

Dorothea's work improved so much that Edgar Wentworth grew enthusiastic in praise of it. Miss Flagler, too, kept prophesying a great career for her "if she'd only keep at it." When the two portraits of the Italian girl were finished, Wentworth persuaded Dorothea to send hers to the spring exhibition of the "American Artists," where it attracted favourable comment. Miss Flagler asked her why she didn't go abroad and study in Paris and get the benefit of the "art atmosphere" there. She loved to talk about the "art atmosphere."

Dorothea used to laugh at the praises she received, though she was secretly pleased. They surprised her, too, for Aleck French had never encouraged her to believe that she had much

talent for painting. During the lessons he gave her, however, he might have been absorbed by other considerations. Besides, Dorothea knew that much of her skill in technique had come from his instruction. He had never been carried away by the eccentricities of the new schools, but had taught her to work soberly and earnestly on conservative lines.

One afternoon in spring Dorothea remained late at the studio to finish an interior that she had been painting for several weeks. Miss Flagler, who had been working with a model in the next room, came in, and, finding her alone, sat down beside her.

"Have you heard the news about Mr. French?" she said.

Dorothea did not dare to look up from the canvas.

"No," she replied, trying to assume a tone of indifference. She had a premonition that something startling was coming. "What is it?"

"He's left his wife."

"Left her!" Dorothea echoed blankly.

"Yes; so they say. I had a letter from Mrs. Swayne to-day—Lena Swayne, you know, who paints dogs. She knows Mr. French very

well. She says he's left the Latin Quarter and taken a house out at Versailles, and no one knows where his wife is."

Dorothea thought of simple, generous Aleck French driven to desperation by a woman whom he ought never to have known, with whom he could have no sympathy. The miserable story seemed so out of keeping with him. He was like a miscast actor; the *rôle* didn't fit him. Miss Flagler hardly knew what comment she ought to make.

"I'm so sorry for him!" said Dorothea.

The words were commonplace enough, but they gave Miss Flagler a clew.

"I'm sorry for him, too," she cried. "But I hope he's got rid of her. Perhaps she's gone off and drowned herself. They often do—those wild Frenchwomen—in the Seine."

Dorothea thought of all the horrible stories she had heard of people who had sought relief from trouble in the Seine, and the thought made her feel more wretched. Why had Aleck French ever gone to Paris? Why had she sent him there? He would never have gone if she hadn't sent him. In Oswego he might at least have lived respectably and kept himself fine and true as he had always been.

It was evident from her next remark, however, that Miss Flagler thought the occasion didn't call for regret.

"If she's gone and drowned herself," she said, "why, then Mr. French is free. I only hope it will be a lesson to him."

"Free!"

Dorothea hadn't thought of that. Her heart stopped beating for a moment; then it jumped. Afterward she wondered why the possibility of his being free agitated her so. Surely everything was over between them. Now he could never hope,—but she would not entertain even the possibility!

That afternoon as soon as she reached home she went into her mother's room. The invalid was swathed in worsted shawls on the lounge and absorbed in a romance. She lifted herself up on her elbow.

"What is it?" she asked.

"I have some news for you, mother," Dorothea replied, holding back her news as one holds a sweetmeat from a child.

"Some one dead or engaged, I suppose."

The invalid put her book-mark in place and closed the novel with decision.

Dorothea threw off her wrap and let it drop

on the back of a chair. "No, not exactly. Aleck French has left his wife."

"Left his *wife*!" Mrs. Wayne rose from her elbow and sat bolt-upright.

"Yes," Dorothea repeated in almost the same words that Miss Flagler had used. "Left the Latin Quarter and taken a house in Versailles, and his wife has disappeared."

"Good Heavens!" cried the invalid, brushing the hair on either side of her head with both hands. Then, as she contemplated her daughter, she went on: "It's a judgment on him. He might have expected it—the idea of his marrying such a——"

"Don't, mother! Please don't!"

"Well——"

Mrs. Wayne was always saying "Well" to her daughter; it was a recognition of defeat. After uttering it this time, she sat back on the lounge and watched Dorothea as she did whenever she had things to say that she knew the girl did not care to hear. She wished that Dorothea would leave the room, so that she might seek out the Misses Marbury and knead this news. But Dorothea gave no sign of being about to leave, and the invalid resigned herself to wait. Finally, after long cogitation, as



Dorothea was bending over the box of paints she had brought into the room, she resumed :

“ I must say I always liked Aleck French.”

She received no reply.

“ I used to think he had character,” the invalid went on, hoping to force her daughter to speak:

“ He *has* character, mother.”

“ Yes, great character, to have treated you as he did ! ”

“ Mother ! ”

This was the first intimation Mrs. Wayne had ever given her daughter that she suspected the real cause of the breaking of the engagement ; but it was only a chance shot, as Dorothea realized later. After making it, she was frightened at her own boldness. She closed her eyes and, in spite of her agitation, she fell asleep and did not wake till dinner-time. For an hour she was obliged to sit opposite the Misses Marbury without uttering a word of the news ; but after dessert she slipped into their room and she was rewarded for her torture by an evening of rare communion of thought.

The Misses Marbury were at first amazed, appalled by the disclosure ; then, after taking

it deep into consciousness, they were unable to throw the light of their social wisdom upon it; for such a case had never before come to their attention; it quite transcended all their former experiences.

Indeed, the lives of these ladies, like the lives of most American women, were remote from social complications. They had the most innocent conception of evil. Of course, their chief interest in Aleck French's complication lay in its relation to Dorothea; they wanted to make clear to her mother just what effect it would have upon the girl. They offered many tentative suggestions, but each of these was hedged about by so many conditions and fatal possibilities that the whole affair was left in a state of chaotic mystery. This sent Mrs. Wayne to bed in nervous excitement, with a new sense of importance and of great events to come, and threw the sisters into the most bewildering agitation they had known since the occasion of Mrs. Follett Ladd's call.

## VII.

THE Misses Marbury resumed their watch on Dorothea's countenance for a sign of the effect upon her of Aleck French's catastrophe ; but again they were disappointed. They concluded, rather illogically, that Dorothea was selfish. As for Mrs. Wayne, she was unable to give much thought to the matter, for she was taken down with a mild attack of rheumatic fever that for several weeks kept her mind chiefly upon herself. Dorothea still went to the League and to the studio, though she did much of her work at home, so that she might be at hand to minister to her mother. Her ministrations were few, however, for the Misses Marbury spent most of their time in the invalid's room, emerging only occasionally to seek an art gallery or a lecture hall, or some other improving resort.

At the studio Edgar Wentworth seconded Miss Flagler's advice that Dorothea go abroad

for further study. Miss Flagler had herself organized a party for summer sketching near Paris, and urged Dorothea to join it; it was to be under the direction of Arthur Roberts, the landscape painter. A lot of League girls were going, and it would be the greatest fun! Miss Flagler smiled suggestively when she announced that Arthur Roberts was to be director; she had secured the chance for him.

But for a turn in her mother's illness, Dorothea would not have seriously thought of following Wentworth's advice. She could hardly believe that her talent was as great as he declared it to be; her years of association with Aleck French had made her mistrustful of her own ability; beside his, her drawings had seemed imitative and weak. She did not realize how great her improvement had been since those days, or that her work might be vastly inferior to his and yet be good. She enjoyed her success, chiefly because it added a keen interest to her life.

It was only when Mrs. Wayne's physician suggested an ocean voyage as a remedy for his patient that Dorothea first considered the plan of studying abroad. It had not before occurred to her that her mother could, or would go; indeed, the invalid did at first object strenuously

to the plan. She wanted to go back to Oswego, she said. She was secretly much disappointed in the winter; she had thought that more would happen to her daughter than had happened; the art work she regarded lightly, as a mere diversion; she wanted Dorothea to get married—*married*, as she said plainly to the Misses Marbury. These ladies counselled patience and—Europe; they had read of so many girls who had made fine marriages through trips to Europe! Besides, Miss Sophia Marbury, who possessed the more vivid imagination of the sisters, felt sure that Dorothea's beauty and "presence" (she had caught the word from Mrs. Wayne) would secure for her a splendid match. She had always maintained, she declared, that Dorothea ought to be the mistress of a great mansion, and walk down to breakfast over broad stairs covered with a crimson carpet.

It was Dorothea's fate to be considered ornamental, to be pushed about from place to place, from niche to niche, in the imagination of her friends, as a beautiful vase is tried here and there in a drawing room for the best effect. Miss Sophia Marbury had never produced a finer effect than when she posed Dorothea



before her mother's vision on the crimson-carpeted stairs of an ancestral hall ; for Mrs. Wayne's mind, though not original, was quick to seize and elaborate the suggestions of others, and as she lay in bed, thinking of her plans for the summer, she added many brilliant touches to Miss Sophia's picture.

Of course, her imagination glowed over Oswego, too, making the little city almost seductive in its delights ; she had forgotten that even the society of the matrons was monotonous ; she thought of them now only as sympathetic listeners to her exposition of her trials with her daughter. Then, inconsistently, she thought of the effect on these ladies of Dorothea's triumphs in Europe. It was really this thought that finally decided her to make the voyage ; she would forego present pleasure for future rewards.

When she broached the plan to Dorothea she was surprised to encounter no opposition. She was always expecting opposition from her daughter, and this gave her timid manner a curious and vexatious suggestion of belligerence.

The Misses Marbury were as excited over the voyage as if they were about to make it

themselves. For many years they had cherished a passionate hope that they might one day visit the art galleries of Europe. For them Europe consisted chiefly of a vista of art galleries, and they loved to think of themselves as wandering in it hand-in-hand to the vanishing point. They bored Mrs. Wayne by dwelling on the art-aspect of a European tour, and they prepared for her a list of galleries that she ought not to fail to visit. With Dorothea they were less prodigal of advice; they could not understand how such a proud, hard girl as she was could really have feeling for art, and her failure to show enthusiasm over the pictures they loved, or over any pictures for that matter, convinced them that with her art was only a pastime.

When Mrs. Wayne consulted the Misses Marbury about the trip, the sisters, with splendid self-abnegation, declared the sooner she departed the better for herself and her daughter. They would miss her dreadfully, of course, and at the thought of the severance of their union the three ladies indulged in preliminary weeping. However, as Miss Sophia remarked, they would be together again in the autumn. Mrs. Wayne had announced her intention of returning to the boarding-house for the winter,

though she had secretly made up her mind to return to Oswego. The Misses Marbury had decided to pass the summer in Maple Valley, in northern New York, where the scenery would almost compensate them for their three months' exile from pictures of scenery.

For the next few weeks Dorothea was so occupied with preparations for her mother's departure that she had no time to go to the studio. So the day before she sailed she wrote notes of farewell to Edgar Wentworth and Miss Flagler. As for Mrs. Wayne, her weakness was so great that for a few days it looked as if the voyage must be abandoned. Now that she had made up her mind to go, she felt bitterly disappointed at the possibility of being obliged to stay at home.

Under the inspiration of her physician, however, who urged her to make an effort to rouse herself, and held out flattering rewards from the trip, and of the Misses Marbury, who covertly inspired her with the prospect of rewards of another sort, Mrs. Wayne rose from her bed three days before the ship sailed, thinner and whiter than ever. These were spent in feverish activity, so that when she reached the ship she went at once to her berth in a state of

collapse. Dorothea had been alarmed about her, and would have insisted upon her staying at the boarding-house, but for the advice of the doctor, who declined to take a serious view of her mother's ailments.

To the end the Misses Marbury supported their friend; they would have gone down the harbour with her if they could have arranged to make the trip, but for the abject weakness of Miss Millicent, who had been known to be violently sick when there was scarcely a ripple on the water. Mrs. Wayne's parting with them had a pathetic intensity; she dreaded the sea, and this farewell seemed to her almost like bidding a last good-bye to her loved ones on earth. The grief of the Misses Marbury was glorified by a sublime unselfishness; they smiled through their tears, as if rejoicing at the pleasure that was to come to their companion in the next three months.

Dorothea watched the scene calmly; she had often been present when her mother went through these agonies, and she had always found them so transient that she could not take them seriously. The Misses Marbury, as they rode home in Mrs. Wayne's carriage, commented on her attitude.

“She’s as hard as *flint*,” said Miss Sophia, and “Poor Mrs. Wayne!” Miss Millicent murmured.

The next morning Dorothea rose early and went up on deck to escape the bad air. Though the weather during the night was hot, the port-holes had all been closed and the atmosphere in her room had kept her from sleeping for more than two or three hours. Her mother she left in deep slumber. Mrs. Wayne had periods of extreme sleepfulness and extreme wakefulness; the sea always made her drowsy, and its influence was increased by the fatigue caused by her three days of nervous energy in New York.

Though it was more than an hour before breakfast, Dorothea found several people on deck. They, too, had evidently been driven from their rooms by the atmosphere. The ship rolled gently and the air was bracing. A tall, pale young man, with a black mustache that formed a half-circle round his mouth, was walking up and down and eating bits of a biscuit that he held in his hand. Dorothea chose the other side of the ship for a promenade, and for the next half-hour she walked energetically. The young man meanwhile sank slowly into a steamer chair and ceased munching his biscuit.



There was in his face a look of haggard interrogation, as if he were wondering what was going to happen next. Dorothea observed the same look in several of the people round her. A few of them were sipping beef-broth, laying the bowl down hastily every few moments and leaning back in their chairs. She could not keep from smiling at these manifestations; she herself had never felt in better health and spirits; she would have liked to run about the deck, to romp; she was full of energy, she felt the physical joy of living.

While she was sitting in her chair after her walk, she heard coming up the gangway a clear woman's voice. It was speedily followed by a tall, thin, wiry figure clinging to the railing and turning to direct speech to the large yellow-faced man behind her. The man seemed hardly in a condition to heed what was being said. He had a wilted look; his bulging blue eyes were glassy, and his blonde beard, just turning gray, harmonized with the colour of his skin. His companion was urging him to walk, but he pulled his arm away from her hand and dropped wearily into a seat near Dorothea.

"You're very foolish not to walk. That's the only way to shake it off."

"Go away!" he said testily, passing his hand over his face.

"Want some beef-tea?"

"No, I don't! Let me alone."

She wrapped around his legs the shawl that she had carried on her arm. He submitted passively, though his face expressed displeasure. Then she sat down beside him and began again to talk.

"I wish you'd go away," he said, from behind his hand. "Just let me alone, and I'll be all right."

For the next few moments she remained in her seat and devoted herself to a scrutiny of her fellow-passengers. Dorothea was watching her, though her eyes were bent on the sea.

After her first shock of surprise, Dorothea felt sure that her impression had not deceived her. There was no mistaking that hawklike face. In all the consciousness of her social position Mrs. Follet Ladd was examining each passenger with judicial calmness. On Dorothea the sharp eyes rested last, and there they remained for a long time. Dorothea felt that her features, her figure, her blue felt hat and her blue ulster with its red lining, were being considered in all their bearings. She bore the

scrutiny without flinching. When it was over, Mrs. Ladd turned as if to speak to her husband, but after a keen glance at his face, which with its closed eyes seemed deathlike, she looked away again and apparently gave herself up to a consideration of the words she had intended to say.

In spite of its sharpness she had a rather fine face. The features were regular, the nose straight, the nostrils well defined, and the thin, tightly compressed lips and the clearly outlined chin indicated firmness of character. The hair, jet black, was tightly arranged at the back of the head. The forehead was the ugliest feature; it was too square and broad for a woman. Mrs. Ladd was evidently very intelligent, but to Dorothea she seemed distinctly unprepossessing. Even now as she rose nervously to peer over the railing of the deck she had the air of swooping down on something. Dorothea feared that Mrs. Ladd might be about to swoop down on her. Of course, she would make prey of a few of the passengers; the others she would ignore. In her brown cloth dress, her heavy black coat, her brown shoes, and black yacht-ing-cap, she made a curious picture as she stood, flanked by the blue sky and the sea.

Not a ship was in sight. Dorothea smiled as she thought of her mother and herself in mid-ocean with Mrs. Follett Ladd. Of course, her mother would rejoice at discovering that the lady was on board with whom she had had so brief and so delicious an intimacy; the knowledge might inspire her to rise from her berth. This invigorating possibility, however, did not make Dorothea feel it was her duty to impart the information. So, when she went into the stateroom, she did not speak of Mrs. Ladd. Mrs. Wayne was wide awake and inhaling the salt air that the stewardess had permitted to pass through the porthole. Her eyes were bright but not feverish, and there was a faint touch of colour in her cheeks.

"You're feeling better, mother, aren't you?"

"Ever so much. I slept beautifully last night. I was so tired. Mrs. McLeod brought me in some beef tea. She thinks I sha'n't be sick, and she's going to help me up on deck by and by." A moment later she added, "There must be some one on board that we know."

Dorothea could not have explained why she hesitated about speaking of Mrs. Follett Ladd's presence on the ship; her mother would certainly recognise her. In the flash of recogni-

tion between them, however, they might agree to ignore their acquaintance. This acquaintance, Dorothea was well aware, her mother would be glad enough to renew; but her agitation might cause her to dissemble, and, once ignored, Mrs. Ladd might keep away from them.

Dorothea was not conscious of this reasoning in her mind; if she had been, she would have been ashamed of it and repudiated it. But it must have been some unconscious reflection of this character that prevented her from speaking out about Harrington Boyd's inquisitive friend. Once restored to intimacy with her mother, Mrs. Ladd would be made the recipient of innumerable personal confidences about herself, and would perhaps become a partner in her mother's scheming as well. Of the scheming with the Misses Marbury, Dorothea was fully aware; her mother had betrayed it by many intimations and references.

In moments of desperation Dorothea wished she could go away to a place where no one knew her, where she could escape being talked over. But such a place, she realized in calmer moods, did not exist. Even if her mother had not the feminine passion for matrimonial conspiracies,



other people would have it for her. Young unmarried women were natural subjects for discussion; after twenty-five the world was a perpetual challenge to them for the reason they were not married.

When Dorothea went on deck with her mother, Mrs. Ladd was not there. She had probably gone below. Half an hour later she reappeared. As soon as her figure stood in the passageway Mrs. Wayne's sharp eyes lit upon her.

The invalid's face flushed and her fingers twitched. She suddenly turned.

"There's Mrs. Follett Ladd! Look—quick! Over there! See her?"

"I saw her this morning," said Dorothea.

Mrs. Wayne darted a reproachful glance at her daughter. Then she turned her eyes again on the social leader. Mrs. Ladd lingered for a moment in the passageway, and then walked over to her chair, which stood only a few yards away from Mrs. Wayne's. The invalid's eyes were ready to catch hers; Dorothea saw that her mother was determined not to allow Mrs. Ladd to escape. She could see, too, the glance of surprise that Mrs. Ladd gave her mother, who was bowing and smiling with impetuous en-

thusiasm. Mrs. Ladd could not have done otherwise than bow in return; but the bow was vague, and for an instant her eyes gave no sign of recognition. Dorothea thought that her mother had lost. Then the hawklike face became illumined, and Mrs. Ladd hurried forward and extended her hand.

"I didn't know you at first," she said, showing small, regular white teeth. "It's such a pleasant surprise to find you on board! How good of you to remember me!"

"I recognised you as soon as I saw you," explained Mrs. Wayne, as if she had performed a feat. Then she presented Dorothea.

"So you are Miss Wayne," Mrs. Ladd exclaimed triumphantly. "I thought there was something unusual about you."

"I am Miss Wayne," Dorothea replied, trying to smile, "but I didn't know there was anything unusual about me."

"I noticed you this morning, and I thought you looked like some one I had seen before. Oh, I've heard so many nice things about you!"

"Have you, really?"

"Dorothea hates compliments," said Mrs. Wayne, her face beaming. "So you mustn't tell her anything pleasant about herself."

"Then I shall be as disagreeable to you as I know how to be," said Mrs. Ladd, glancing at the girl and making her feel that she was being "taken in" again.

"Do bring your chair up, Mrs. Ladd."

Mrs. Wayne felt a certain frigid quality in her daughter's demeanour that usually subdued her; now, however, she determined to fight against it, and, in spite of Dorothea's desire to keep Mrs. Ladd at a distance, to be herself as agreeable to the social leader as she knew how to be.

Mrs. Ladd acted on the invitation at once.

"It's such a relief to see you here," she said, when she had completed an elaborate arrangement of wraps for her comfort. "I've been looking the passengers over, and I can see that most of them are impossible. There are a lot of horrid Western people on board."

"We are Western, you know," said Dorothea calmly.

Mrs. Ladd's swarthy face flushed a little, but she kept her composure.

"But not the horrid kind, my dear."

"What are you talking about, Dorothea? You know well enough that Oswego isn't the

West. Besides, your father came from New England."

"It would be much easier to forgive Oswego than New England," Mrs. Ladd smiled. She had herself all the provincialism that comes from a residence of forty years in New York, combined with a consciousness of Dutch ancestors who had lived there before her.

"You know we are always called Western people when we're in Boston," said Dorothea, turning to her mother.

Mrs. Wayne was anxious to ask Mrs. Ladd questions about her friends on the steamer, her plans, and many other subjects. A splendid project leaped into her mind of combining forces with the social leader and conducting a glorious campaign in Dorothea's behalf. Mrs. Ladd, of course, had the entrance into many a noble English house. The vision of her daughter walking down to breakfast over a crimson-carpeted staircase again caressed her imagination. Mrs. Wayne longed for a confidential talk with Mrs. Ladd; she had so much to tell her about Dorothea. Of course, it would be impossible to have a confidential talk on any subject in her daughter's presence,

which seemed always to produce the effect of blighting confidence.

Mrs. Wayne's desire to hear of Mrs. Ladd's "party" and plans was speedily gratified, and as the information was being unfolded, her imagination illustrated it by a series of brilliant pictures, each having Dorothea for its central figure.

"We're going just for a few months this time," she explained, when she had questioned Dorothea with regard to her programme for the summer. "Mr. Ladd and I thought we'd run over for the change. We intend to do just as we please. We'll probably stay for a little while in London, and then go down to the country for a rest. I'm always so tired after the winter. One has to do so many things nowadays. The whole burden of life seems to have fallen on us poor women; yet some fools of women are trying to get more responsibilities."

"Women are becoming so forward," Mrs. Wayne sighed.

Dorothea smiled in spite of herself. Mrs. Ladd's quick eye noticed her expression.

"Surely you don't take sides with those silly women," she said in mock horror.



Dorothea was amused by the unconscious patronage. "I don't take either side," she replied.

"Oh!" Mrs. Ladd's eye blinked. She said to herself that the girl was interesting but hateful. "But you must sympathize one way or the other," she went on after a moment.

"I think I sympathize with the women. If they want certain privileges that men have, I don't see why they shouldn't have them."

"But it spoils them; it makes them unwomanly."

"Think of a woman *voting!*" said Mrs. Wayne, with fine contempt.

"I can't see why women shouldn't vote if they want to. Some women need to vote to protect their rights, I've heard. If that is so, they certainly ought to have the privilege of voting, it seems to me."

"But it imposes such a duty on *us*," said Mrs. Ladd.

"The duty of helping other people, I suppose."

"Oh, you are too *subtle*," Mrs. Ladd cried, rather irrelevantly, Dorothea thought. "You'd have us inundated by the lower classes. Every

woman in the lower classes would be sure to vote."

"I suppose they have a right to be heard, like other people."

"But, my *dear*," Mrs. Ladd interposed, "think of the influence the lower classes would gain by it."

"The vote of all classes would be doubled, wouldn't it?" said Dorothea, with a smile.

"But the women of *our* world wouldn't vote."

"Then they must be less intelligent than the women of the lower classes."

"But can't you see," Mrs. Ladd insisted, despairingly, "that would oblige *us* to vote?"

"It would also oblige us to think," Dorothea laughed. "That wouldn't be very bad, would it?"

"Ah, my dear," said Mrs. Ladd, sinking back in her chair with a smile, "I shall have to take you in hand;" and "Where in the world did you *get* these ideas?" cried Mrs. Wayne, impatiently.

Half an hour later, on returning to the state-room, Mrs. Ladd found her husband less disagreeable than he had been since they left New York. He was still cross, however; indeed, his

usual attitude toward his wife was one of bored resentment. He was lying on his back, and his face was yellow and unshaven. When she asked him in her brisk voice how he felt, he merely grunted.

"Who do you suppose are on board?" she said.

He did not condescend to reply.

"Those people Harrington Boyd met near Boston last summer."

"What people?" he half-articulated, closing his eyes.

"Why, the girl that jilted him—the one I told you about. She's here with her mother."

The yellow face grew more animated and the bulging eyes opened.

"What's she like?"

"*She's* magnificent—the girl. She'll make a great success in London if she's properly managed."

"Met them?" Ladd rolled his eyes toward his wife. He had a habit of looking her over questioningly, as if wondering what she was doing in his presence.

Mrs. Ladd nodded. "Just now."

For a moment Ladd lay with his eyes closed.

Then, "How old is she?" he said, opening them again.

Mrs. Ladd was holding a small glass before her face and arranging her hair with one hand.

"Thirty."

"Pretty?"

"No; handsome—handsome and icy."

Follett Ladd had been born rich and he had deliberately dedicated himself to a life of ease; he had no talents and few interests beyond those connected with pleasure; he could play a good game of cards, and he could turn an appreciative eye on horse-flesh. He could also sit still for hours at his club window, smoking a cigar and ruminating, and gazing with appreciation at the pretty women in Fifth Avenue. With his wife he lived on terms of armed neutrality. In New York they were seldom seen together, and their indifference to each other was well known. He served her simply as a fund and a matrimonial background. People used to wonder how so dull a man as Follett Ladd had happened to marry so clever a woman; for, though Mrs. Ladd was disliked in her set—and out of it, too, for she was ready to rush in everywhere with counsel—her cleverness was generally admitted. "She means well enough,"

said Mrs. Bateman Hyde of her one day, "but her good intentions evaporate in bustle and talk." Like most epigrams, this was not wholly just. Mrs. Ladd's good intentions often had beneficent realizations; she occupied herself with much unostentatious charity, and she occasionally lent a helping hand to promising talent. But to talent that did not promise success she was indifferent. She surrounded herself with clever people who were either on the top of the wave or on the way to it. In course of time a tacit agreement had grown up between herself and her husband that they were to let each other alone, that they were both to do as they pleased. This agreement Mrs. Ladd constantly violated in small things; but with regard to the more vital affairs of life she had nothing to say to her husband. In public she treated him with a show of affection. But, "Oh, she talks too much!" he used to say to his friends about her.

Follett Ladd's phlegmatic temperament, however, kept him from being touched very deeply by his wife's brisk irritations. His trials were simply surface trials; his thick layer of fat seemed to serve as an impregnable barrier to genuine trouble. He felt, as he looked back on his life of pleasure, that it had been a successful



life. This is not the way he would have expressed it, however; he would probably have said that he'd got as much out of life as most men did. Of the glow of work, of the joy of achievement, he knew and he wished to know nothing; indeed, he had no real belief that such pleasure existed in the world; to him all effort was drudgery. He had often seen his wife in the glow of gratuitous work, in the joy of what seemed to him a fatuous achievement, and the spectacle disgusted him. Mrs. Ladd, indeed, seemed always to be working in some way; her indefatigable brain could never keep still; if she couldn't exercise it in a high and mighty way, she would exercise it ignobly. During the voyage she would probably exercise it chiefly on the girl she had been speaking about, prying into her secrets and interfering with her plans. At any rate, it would give her something to think of; so she would probably let him alone.

## VIII.

THE weather continued pleasant, and on the fourth day out the big dining room of the Lucania was crowded at every meal. As Dorothea had anticipated, the friendship between her mother and Mrs. Ladd developed steadily, though her own acquaintance with the social leader did not notably prosper. Mrs. Ladd had persuaded Mrs. Wayne to pass a few weeks in London ; she knew of some delightful lodgings that could be secured in Mandeville Place, near Portman Square ; the Snells had lived there the year before. Every one—that is, every visitor—in London lived in lodgings or hotels, and the lodgings were the cheaper and more desirable. Mrs. Ladd had herself already taken lodgings in Clarges Street ; a great many Americans went there ; it was very convenient, just off Piccadilly, but expensive. Mrs. Wayne had revealed to her friend that she intended to be economical during her travels ; she was always

talking about economy, though she rarely practised it.

Two days before reaching Liverpool, Mrs. Wayne planned with Mrs. Follett Ladd that they should go down to London together. Dorothea was prepared for the arrangement, though her mother had said nothing to her about it. She was none the less vexed, however, when she found herself in the first-class compartment with the curious couple from New York.

Of course, she might have rebelled and insisted upon taking another train; but she knew that this would disappoint her mother, and she submitted with as much apparent amiability as she could command. During the first hours of the journey she had very little to say; but her silence was not noticeable, for Mrs. Ladd talked incessantly, reminiscing with regard to previous journeys she had taken between Liverpool and London, pointing out places of interest on the way, and giving Mrs. Wayne voluminous instructions with reference to her life in London, the feeing system, the management of servants, the paying of cabmen, and a score of other details. Dorothea wondered why Mrs. Ladd had not spoken of these things during the

conferences with her mother on the ship. Follett Ladd lapsed into the sullen silence which he always displayed when obliged to endure his wife's loquacity. Sometimes, when the rattling of the train prohibited normal conversation, Mrs. Ladd's voice would rise to a shriek, and Mrs. Wayne would shriek back an incoherent reply. Then the disgust in Ladd's face would become so amusing that Dorothea could hardly keep from laughing.

After a time, however, she tried to divert herself from the talk and to become absorbed in the landscape. The English country seemed to her quite as lovely as she had hoped to find it; the deep green of the foliage and of the grass, the quaint thatched cottages, and the small, ivy-clad stone houses, all delighted her. The fields that seemed to rush past her were brilliant with poppies, their scarlet petals making a vivid contrast with the grass. She felt as if she had known it all in another life or in dreams; she explained this by the descriptions of the English country that she had read in novels.

It was nearly seven o'clock when the train reached London. Follett Ladd and his wife insisted upon taking their friends to the hotel before going to their lodgings.

"We can get a four-wheeler just as well as not," said Mrs. Ladd, "and it won't be much out of our way."

So they were soon huddled in the little vehicle and bowling over the smooth London streets toward the Metropole. Mrs. Wayne was visibly excited; her eyes blazed; every few minutes there was in them a suggestion of tears. This was a bad sign, and Dorothea felt alarmed; she also experienced the curious nervous tension that one feels on arriving in a great city for the first time. How dreadful it would be, she thought, if her mother were to fall ill and sink into one of her long periods of physical and mental depression! Of course, there would be a reaction after the voyage and from the excitement of her talks with Mrs. Ladd.

When they reached the hotel, Mrs. Ladd, who had been screaming during the whole of the ride, had several parting injunctions to make before she would allow the invalid to get out.

"I'll come in to-morrow about ten," she cried at the end, "and we'll go to see those lodgings together. Good-bye, dear."

She kissed Mrs. Wayne on both cheeks. With Dorothea she merely shook hands, and



said: "It was so nice to have you on the ship! Good-bye. I'll see you to-morrow, too, perhaps."

Mrs. Wayne's grief at parting with her friend speedily developed into irritation. She had no appetite for dinner, and, as Dorothea unpacked one of the trunks, she looked on and complained of the way her dresses had been put into them. Suddenly she burst into a fit of weeping. In this Dorothea recognised a touch of her mother's old weakness, and, instead of asking what the matter was, she quietly undressed her and put her to bed.

"I wish I had never come. I wish I'd stayed at home. I'd give a thousand dollars to be back!" the invalid kept moaning.

She was like a child in her grief, and Dorothea treated her as a child. The crying, Dorothea knew, would do her good; but for that she would probably not have slept at all, instead of falling to sleep, as she did, before Dorothea went herself to bed. The invalid's face looked very yellow and thin as it lay on the pillow in the big bed. Dorothea, touched with a sudden tenderness, bent and kissed it. Then she turned out the light. She was so miserable that she could have cried, too; she

did not realize, however, that, like her mother, she was feeling the first pangs of homesickness. Instead of yielding to her feelings, she went to bed and slept soundly till seven o'clock.

When she awoke she heard a noise in the next room. Her mother must be up and bustling about. So she was not going to be ill, after all. Indeed, Mrs. Wayne, after her sleep, seemed quite another person from the gaunt woman in the bed the night before. She was full of energy, and acted as if she were about to catch a train.

"I'm ever so much better," she said, when Dorothea appeared before her. "I don't feel a bit tired after the journey. And see how lovely it is! It's going to be a beautiful day. I don't see a sign of fog."

"It isn't apt to be foggy here in summer, you know," said Dorothea, with a smile. "Why did you get up so early?" In New York her mother had never risen before nine at the earliest, and she had always had her breakfast served in bed.

"Mrs. Ladd is coming."

"But not till ten o'clock."

"Well, I have a lot of things to do before then."

It was nearly half past ten when Mrs. Ladd arrived at the hotel. She seemed even more energetic than usual. "How did you sleep?" she asked, after kissing Mrs. Wayne and shaking hands with Dorothea, with the easy familiarity of an old friend. "And how well you're looking! I was afraid I might find you tired out after the journey. Our lodgings are delightful. The same servants are there that waited on us ten years ago. That's one great thing about the English, they *can* keep servants, but some of them complain just the same. Mr. Ladd was so cross this morning! He never can get enough for breakfast in England, he says, though I had a steak cooked for him expressly."

"I'm afraid we made you take breakfast very early," said Mrs. Wayne.

"Oh, no. We never breakfast later than nine. Then I got up at six this morning to write some letters and send some cards off. I ought to have written to the Ledyards and Lady Downes that I was coming, but I had so much to do before I left New York that I couldn't manage it. Lady Downes will be over this afternoon, and I do wish you would come for tea and meet her," Mrs. Ladd

concluded, with a nod and a glance at Dorothea.

"I'm afraid mother will be too tired to go out in the afternoon if she goes this morning."

Dorothea began to feel alarmed about her mother. Mrs. Ladd's London campaign threatened to break the invalid down again.

"Oh, don't you worry about me, dear," said Mrs. Wayne, who had acquired an independent manner with her daughter in presence of the social leader. "I guess I shall be able to go. If I'm not, Mrs. Ladd will excuse me."

"Of course." Mrs. Ladd glanced at Mrs. Wayne and then at Dorothea. "What a pretty frock!" she cried, surveying Dorothea's costume of brown cloth. "Turn round and let me see the back."

"Yes, Meserve made it," Mrs. Wayne said proudly. "I thought he'd suit her style."

Mrs. Ladd thoughtfully stroked Dorothea's back. "Yes, it's a perfect fit. I should have liked the waist a little longer, perhaps, but it'll do."

An expression of disappointment darkened Mrs. Wayne's face. This frock she regarded as a triumph. "I suppose we could have it altered over here," she said anxiously.

"It is quite good enough as it is," said Dorothea coldly, and for the moment Mrs. Ladd was silenced. Dorothea resented the familiarity of the social leader; she was taking altogether too much for granted.

While Mrs. Wayne was adjusting her silk cape to her shoulders Mrs. Ladd paced up and down in the room. She always found it difficult to sit still unless deep in conversation. When she could not talk she would walk; this habit had on many occasions ruffled her husband's composure.

"There's something about this English air," she said at last, when Mrs. Wayne was ready to depart, "that makes me intensely nervous. At home the atmosphere exhilarates you, buoys you up; but here it doesn't give you the least support."

When they reached the street, "I came in a four-wheeler," Mrs. Ladd went on, "and it's waiting for me. I prefer a hansom, but three of us couldn't get into it very well. Mandeville Place," she cried to the driver, "ninety-five."

As the carriage rolled along the smooth pavement Dorothea felt as if she and her mother were under the temporary tutelage of



an exceedingly domineering guardian. Yet she appreciated the humour of the situation, and could not help smiling. Mrs. Ladd noticed the smile, and misinterpreted it for a sign of concession.

Mandeville Place they found to be a short street with very dark stone houses on either side. "It looks a little dull," said Mrs. Ladd, noticing an expression of disappointment in Mrs. Wayne's face, "but it's very nice. Lady Marmsworth lives over there. She's a great leader in the smart set. I do hope that Wood is here still," she added as she rang the bell. "The Snells liked him so much! He's the butler, you know, and he looks after the rooms and provides the food. He's really the best servant I ever saw. The Snells tried to get him to go back with them, but his wife wouldn't go. His wife does the cooking, and I can recommend her. I've never had better dinners in London than the Snells used to give here. Oh, I'm sure— How do you do, Wood? I was just wondering if you were here."

A tall, thin young man with a smooth face was bowing and smiling obsequiously at the open door.

"It's Mrs. Ladd, isn't it?" he asked.

"Yes, and I've brought some friends of mine to look at your rooms. I hope they aren't taken."

By the time she had finished this speech Mrs. Ladd was in the hall. Mrs. Wayne and Dorothea walked meekly behind. Wood continued to bow and smile in front of them.

"The gentleman that had the two rooms on the ground floor went away the day before yesterday," he said. "Those are the only rooms we have left."

"Then the Snells' rooms are taken?"

"Yes, a Russian gentleman has them."

"Aren't there any ladies in the house?" Mrs. Wayne inquired nervously.

"Oh, yes," Wood replied in his soft voice. "There's an English lady and her two daughters. They're up for the season from the country. Then there's another family, a Spanish gentleman and his wife, on the top floor."

"Well, let us see the rooms, Wood," said Mrs. Ladd.

"Certainly, ma'am."

Wood opened the first door at his left and led the ladies into a large room that looked into the street. It was handsomely furnished

with heavy old-fashioned carved mahogany, and with an abundance of old prints and of china plates on the walls. The window seats were richly upholstered, and against the opposite wall towered an enormous mahogany sideboard that gleamed with glass and china. In the centre stood a table, draped with a soft, thick, red cloth.

Mrs. Ladd swept the room with her sharp eyes. "It's quite as pleasant as the Snells' apartment, Wood," she said.

"Many lodgers prefers this," said the functionary deprecatingly. His bad grammar gave Dorothea a shock of surprise, he seemed such a perfect production, with the politeness and reserve of a Chesterfield. He put his hand over his mouth, and Dorothea expected to hear him cough, but, instead, he added very gently, "It's more cheerful when there's a fire."

"A fire in June!" Mrs. Wayne exclaimed.

"Oh, yes," said Mrs. Ladd. "You must expect to have a fire almost every day here—it's so damp. How do you like it?"

"I'm sure it would be much better than the hotel," said Mrs. Wayne, without committing herself.

"Oh, but we must see the bedrooms!" cried Mrs. Ladd.

Wood led the way into the rear of the apartment, where they found two small, well lighted, and comfortably furnished rooms. Mrs. Ladd promptly began to knead with the back of her left hand the first bed they saw. "It seems all right. The Snells liked the beds very much. By the way, Wood, where are the Snells now? Have they been here since last year?"

"They're in France now—in the south," Wood replied. "They wrote to Mrs. Wood and said they weren't coming for the season this year."

"Oh, yes," said Mrs. Ladd, absent-mindedly, as if she had dismissed all thought of the Snells before her question was answered. "You see," she went on, turning to Mrs. Wayne, "you wouldn't be bothered at all about cooking here. The kitchen is downstairs, and the food would be sent up." Then, as they returned to the large room, "What's the price, Wood?" she asked, in her brisk manner.

"Three guineas a week for the rooms and service," Wood replied, and Dorothea fancied that she saw him flush.

"Why, we pay almost as much as that a day for our rooms at the hotel," said Mrs. Wayne, exaggerating in her zeal.

"Yes, it's very reasonable," Mrs. Ladd agreed. "It won't cost you much more than that for the food. You can tell Wood what you want, and he'll do the ordering for you."

"Oh, I'm not very particular," said Mrs. Wayne, and Dorothea tried not to smile. "What do you think, dear?"

"But shall we be in London long enough to take lodgings, mother?"

"We'll be here a couple of weeks, anyway. And I'd much rather be here than in the hotel."

Dorothea thought of her mother's eagerness to discover acquaintances on the ship at the very beginning of their travels, and of her probable loneliness in the lodgings; but she replied: "Do just as you please, mother. I'm willing to come here if you like."

"Could we come to-day?" Mrs. Wayne asked eagerly.

"Certainly," said Mrs. Ladd.

"I'll have a fire if the ladies wish," said Wood.

"Oh, it's too pleasant for a fire." Mrs. Wayne was all excitement. She had not hoped



that the business could be arranged so quickly. Dorothea, on the contrary, felt depressed and nervous. Mrs. Ladd's scheming had already begun to have definite results. She did not want to stay in London in summer; she would have preferred the country; now her mother was committing herself to the city for at least a fortnight. She tried to console herself, however, with the thought that if her mother fell ill it would be much better for her to be in lodgings than in the hotel.

Mrs. Ladd quickly made arrangements for the installation of her friends. Wood summoned his wife, a short, comely woman with red cheeks, not so fine a type as her husband, but, like him, eager to serve. Mrs. Ladd addressed her as Martha, and Dorothea was prepared to hear the social leader give orders for the evening meal. Mrs. Wayne, however, interposed, and said she should be willing to let Martha prepare a dinner of her own devising. The ladies presently turned to the doors, Mrs. Wayne with a little sigh, Mrs. Ladd with the air of having accomplished a good day's work, Dorothea without a change of countenance to indicate her annoyance.

Mrs. Ladd declined the invitation for dinner

that Mrs. Wayne extended to her, and after leaving the ladies at the hotel, she started for Clarges Street. "Lady Downes will look in this afternoon," she said at parting, "and possibly one or two others. I'll call to-morrow about tea time. Of course, you'll have afternoon tea while you're here. Wood will see to that," she laughed, as she leaned out of the carriage window.

The rest of the day Dorothea spent in the agitation of moving again. She made her mother go to bed directly after luncheon for her daily nap, and as soon as Mrs. Wayne, tired out by the morning's experience, woke from her sleep, it was time to repair to Mandeville Place.

When they arrived there, at six o'clock, though it was still light, they found the curtains drawn, the drawing room illuminated, the table bright with a white damask cloth and lighted candles. Wood had done his best to make the place inviting.

Mrs. Wayne's face beamed. "How lovely!" she exclaimed, and, in spite of herself, Dorothea was pleased.

Wood bowed and smiled and looked very happy.

"Dinner will be served at half past seven," he said, obsequiously.

## IX.

DOROTHEA and her mother found their lodgings even more attractive than Mrs. Ladd had represented them to be. Wood and his wife displayed a zeal for service that had never been equalled in their American experience. Moreover Mrs. Wood developed a genius for reminiscence and companionship that delighted the widow, and relieved Dorothea's apprehension that her mother would find the loneliness of lodgings intolerable.

After the first dinner, Mrs. Wood, while removing the tablecloth, revealed some of the treasures of her mind. Before her marriage she had lived in many a noble family, and she had made her own observations of the British aristocracy. Dorothea saw that she need not fear to leave her parent alone with this storehouse of personal information. She had feared that her mother's dislike to sight-seeing might prevent her from going about as she had hoped

to do, from taking trips to the National Gallery, the Tower, the British Museum, and other places in London that her reading had made her familiar with. Now, however, Mrs. Wood's loquacity would more than compensate her mother for her own absences from the lodgings.

The next morning, to her daughter's surprise, Mrs. Wayne was quite as energetic as she had been the day before. After breakfast she at once turned her attention to the consideration of domestic arrangements. "I think I shall order the meals, after all," she said. "It seems like housekeeping again. And it's so long since I've kept house I shall like the novelty of it. Besides, we must ask the Ladds to dinner," she added, rather inconsequently.

"Wouldn't it be better for us to wait till the Ladds ask *us* to dinner?" said Dorothea, taking her box of paints from one of the trunks that stood in the passageway.

Mrs. Wayne started to say something, but she did not say it. A moment later, however, she replied, "Oh, I guess they'll ask us before very long."

Dorothea's eyes wandered vaguely around the room. "It's a pity the light is so poor here. This isn't a good place to work in."

"Oh, I do wish you'd give that up for a while. I should think you'd want to take a rest."

Dorothea did not reply, and when, a moment later, her mother left the room, she looked over some half-finished canvases she had brought with her. One of them, begun in Oswego, reminded her of Aleck French, and now, as she started to paint, her mind went back to him. She wondered if he were in London. She would like to see him again; her feeling for him now was wholly friendly; she thought of him as one who had made a great mistake, which had almost glorified with pity her liking for him. But London was a very big place, and even if he were in the city she would probably not meet him. If any of her old Oswego friends were in London she would have a chance of meeting him at their hotels and lodgings; but none of them had come abroad, with the exception of the Watsons, who were travelling through Normandy.

After luncheon Dorothea suggested to her mother that they go to the National Gallery for an hour or two; but life in New York with the Misses Marbury had inspired Mrs. Wayne with a hatred of all art galleries. "It



would just tire me to death to walk through that place," she said. "Besides, Mrs. Ladd is coming for tea. I don't think it's very nice of you to go out when you know that."

"I shall be back before she comes."

For years Dorothea had looked forward to seeing in the National Gallery the Turners, whose praises she had read in Ruskin. She secretly resolved not to return till five o'clock, partly to allow her mother to have a *tête-à-tête* with the social leader, chiefly to shorten a disagreeable meeting. As she rang for Wood to call a cab, "I don't think it's decent for a girl to be seen in the streets of London alone," said her mother, one hand clutching at the other.

"But I go about in New York alone," Dorothea laughed as she put on her hat.

"Well, it's a different thing in New York. Mrs. Ladd——"

"I wish you wouldn't keep bringing up Mrs. Ladd, mother. You forget that I'm nearly twenty-nine years old and quite capable of taking care of myself."

The widow turned away despairingly, and a few moments later Dorothea left the house and entered the cab that had rolled up to the

curbstone. Then she had one of those moments of misery that differences with her mother always caused her. At these times she was severe with herself for her lack of forbearance. Now she even thought of going back and passing the afternoon in the lodgings; but this, she knew, would simply make her mother more peevish. It was not until the cab had entered Regent Circus and her mind was diverted by the crowds of people in the streets and by the variegated shop windows that she recovered her spirits.

When she reached the Gallery she asked at once for the Turner room. There she had a shock of disappointment. Viewed collectively, the huge canvases seemed to her wild and meaningless. Yet Aleck French, she remembered, after his first visit in London, had written to her enthusiastically in praise of them. He had called them fantastic and ideal, but wonderful in colouring and atmosphere. She resolved to study them one by one, and for an hour she sat in the room examining a few of them in detail. After a time she began to feel their beauty; they seemed to her the expression of a poet's outlook on life. They were not what she herself saw, and they

did not bear the test of what Aleck French had taught her to regard as the best art; but in her admiration she forgot to judge them by rule; she forgot even to think of Aleck French at all, and she presently yielded to their spell. She did not think of anything else until she glanced up and saw French standing before her.

The blood rushed to her face, and for a moment she looked at him without speaking. Then, "Why, Aleck!" she said, rising from her seat and offering her hand impulsively.

As he stood there he seemed very big and awkward and homely. His face was bronzed as if he had been much in the sun, and his heavy chin was covered with a thin brown beard. He took her hand and showed his big white teeth as he looked down on her with an almost apologetic smile.

"I thought I should meet you here," he said.

"I didn't know you were in London."

"I've been here a couple of weeks. I knew you were here, or were coming."

"How did you know that?"

"Miss Flagler wrote me," he replied, betraying a little embarrassment in his face.

“Oh!”

“She wrote me some time ago; she didn’t know then when you were coming. I got a note from her yesterday saying you had sailed. But she didn’t give your address.”

“No, I didn’t send it to her.”

“Let’s sit down; then you won’t get tired.”

They took seats on the velvet divan where Dorothea had been sitting, and Aleck French went on:

“I knew this would be one of the first places you’d come to. I came here yesterday. I didn’t find you in the morning; so I came again in the afternoon.”

Dorothea did not know what to say in acknowledgment of this speech. He flushed again and smiled, and went on with a suggestion of his old sheepish manner with her: “I came this morning, too.”

She looked up into his face. “That was very kind of you, Aleck. I am really glad to see you.”

She had not intended to be patronizing; but she realized as she spoke that this was the tone she was taking with him. He did not appear to notice it, however. “How is your mother?” he said. “I suppose she’s with you.”

For several moments they talked about Mrs. Wayne and about people in Oswego. Then French spoke about Dorothea's work and said he'd heard she was making wonderful progress. She knew that he wanted to speak of his marriage and of his treatment of her, but was afraid to begin, and he knew that she knew it. He did not know, however, that, though waiting for him to speak, she was helping him to fence away from the subject. She could see plainly that he was suffering in his inability to pour out the contrition that was shining in his eyes. He seemed to her as he sat there a great baby, and all trace of resentment against him vanished from her mind. Her old liking for him came back; in spite of his faults, in spite of his duplicity with her, she still believed him to be one of the most honest men she had ever known.

He lingered for a long time on the subject of her work, questioning her with regard to Wentworth's instruction and her studies at the League. Then he spoke of his own pictures, of those he had done during the past year. He was on a big one now—the Battle of Austerlitz. He didn't like the subject, of course; it was out of his line; but a rich American had offered him a lot of money to do it. He talked on till Doro-



thea told him she must go; she had promised to return home before five o'clock.

"I'll go with you if you'll let me. I'll call a cab."

"I'd rather walk," she said.

"Have you seen much here?" he asked, suddenly, as if he had just realized that he ought to have conducted her through the Gallery.

"I've seen some of the Turners. They are enough for one day. I don't like to hurry through a gallery."

"No, of course not. Your impressions get all confused."

"I shall come again—often," she said.

For a few moments as they walked through Trafalgar Square in the direction of Piccadilly Circus neither spoke. Dorothea knew that he was about to begin on the subject that they had both avoided. As they were passing the Haymarket Theatre he said:

"I suppose you know about my trouble with my wife, don't you?"

"Miss Flagler told me. I was sorry to hear about it."

"It was just what I deserved." They walked on in silence for a few steps. "I've been punished for the way I acted with you,"

he continued. "I haven't a word to say for myself—there isn't anything to *be* said. But I'd like to have you know that I—that I do care."

"I've understood that, Aleck, all along. I haven't blamed you."

This speech was not exactly true, as Dorothea was well aware. He would take it, however, as a sign that she had forgiven his offence, and was willing to be his friend again.

"I've lived in Hell ever since. God, how I've had it rubbed in!"

She turned her head away. After a moment she said again, "I'm sorry, Aleck."

"You ought not to be. I don't deserve any one's pity. I'm just getting my deserts."

"Where is your wife now?"

"*Where* is she?" he laughed. "Heaven only knows! I don't. She left me months ago. They said I left her, but that wasn't true."

"Can't you—can't you——" She stopped, for she felt unable to put her thought into words. As she started to express it she saw how foolish it was.

"No, it's impossible. You can't imagine the kind of woman she is. You wouldn't be yourself if you could. You don't know any-

thing about the— Oh, it's too vile for you to think about!"

They didn't speak again for several moments. Then, "What are you going to do, Aleck?" she said.

"Going to do?"

"Yes. Are you going to stay in Paris, or are you going back to America?"

"I should like to go back. I've had enough of Paris. But I couldn't make up my mind to face America again. I've been on the verge of going a dozen times. There's a kind of fascination about the life over here."

"I should think it would be better for you to go back."

"To Oswego?"

"No; to New York."

"Yes, I suppose I might go to New York. Perhaps I shall. I'll think about it, anyway. But I don't like the idea of meeting father again."

"How is your father, Aleck?"

"I haven't heard from him since I told him about my marriage—except once. I sha'n't forget *that* letter very soon. Father always thought a good deal of you, you know; but he—he didn't——"

"How big and crowded London is!" Dorothea interrupted quickly. "I was afraid I should be disappointed in it, but it's more wonderful than I thought it could be."

He descended from his heroics.

"It seems like a great, gloomy wilderness to me," he said. "Still, there are some good spots in it. It's rather fine around Piccadilly; but the mixture of different styles of architecture is bad. You have to take London in the mass to find real beauty. All the beauty disappears if you look at it in detail."

Their talk returned to personal matters, and remained on safe topics. Dorothea gave her companion an account of some of her experiences since she had last seen him, of her winter in New York, and of her voyage. Her description of the Follett Ladds made him laugh. He had never heard of them before, but he said he could imagine what they were like. She didn't tell him about Mrs. Ladd's scheming with her mother; if he had been cleverer, however, he might have surmised that from his acquaintance with Mrs. Wayne. With the widow he had long been on terms of jocular familiarity; on his visits at her house she had always brightened and ap-

peared at her best. He knew, however, how she tried Dorothea, and he surmised that she was as peevish as ever. He was disappointed at finding Dorothea so little changed. She had always seemed remote to him, and now he felt that, so far as he was concerned, her remoteness had become absolute. As he walked and talked with her, he thought with a keener sense of all he had missed by his folly. She appeared so fine, so serene, so admirably adjusted! He admired her all the more for the calm way in which she had placed him on a friendly basis with her again. He said to himself that such a woman was created, not merely to be loved, but worshipped. This made him wonder if a worshipper had taken his old place, and when they reached the door of the lodgings he asked boldly :

“Are you engaged?”

She looked up into his face and smiled. “No,” she replied. “Mother is afraid I shall never get married.”

“I should like to see your mother,” he said, flushing.

“Won’t you come in and see her now? Mrs. Ladd is probably gone. It must be after five. I had forgotten about her.”



"Thank you—some other time. Perhaps you'd better prepare her," he added with a smile.

"She would be glad to see you."

He hesitated a moment. "And are *you* glad to see me?" he said, looking down into her face.

"Yes."

"And you'll let me be your friend again?"

She extended her hand. "Certainly, Aleck."

For a moment he held her hand.

"You are too good to me, Dorothea." he said.

## X.

WHEN Dorothea entered the lodgings her mother confronted her.

"So *that's* why you were so eager to come over here!" she cried, her eyes bright with anger.

For a moment Dorothea did not understand her mother's words. Then, when she saw their meaning, her face turned scarlet; she was too indignant to reply. As she walked across the room, her mother turned to resume the attack.

"I don't wonder you're ashamed to speak."

"If you'll explain what you mean, mother, I *will* speak."

"Explain what I mean? You know well enough what I mean. Going off in a strange city and having clandestine meetings with another woman's husband!"

"If you mean that I've had a clandestine meeting with Aleck French, mother, you are very much mistaken. I didn't know he was in

the city till I met him in the National Gallery."

Mrs. Wayne was silenced. If she had stopped to think, she would have seen that her suspicion was ridiculous, and she might not have uttered it; but it was her habit to think after she spoke, if she thought at all. Now Dorothea's plain statement convinced her that she had been mistaken. To her knowledge her daughter had never told her a deliberate lie. When she spoke again it was to say, "What is Aleck French doing in London, anyway?"

"I didn't ask him."

"If you weren't ashamed of being seen on the street with him, why didn't you bring him in?"

"He thought Mrs. Ladd was here, and he said he'd come some other time."

"Mrs. Ladd's been gone a half an hour. Nice thing for you to walk off, when you knew she was coming!"

"I thought I should find her here," said Dorothea, in a conciliatory tone.

"She asked us to dinner to-morrow night," Mrs. Wayne went on, subsiding.

"And did you say you'd go?"

"Of course I did. Lady Downes and her son are to be there to meet us."

Dorothea thoughtfully stuck her hat-pin in her hat and then put the hat carefully away.

"Mrs. Ladd says the Downes are one of the best families in England."

"Are they?"

Dorothea took her seat at the desk in the corner of the room and prepared to write a note.

"They have a lovely place twenty-five miles out of London. Mrs. Ladd visits them every year."

Dorothea began to write.

"The son is very handsome, Mrs. Ladd says. He's the only child. He has the estate now. His father died five years ago."

As Dorothea continued writing, Mrs. Wayne began to walk up and down the room, rearranging the furniture and bits of *bric-à-brac*.

Dorothea knew that her mother's restlessness was due to a desire to discuss the coming dinner; but she was not herself in the mood; if she did discuss it she felt that she would betray her irritation at being obliged to attend it, and in this way aggravate her mother again.

Mrs. Wayne presently took a seat by the

empty fireplace and folded her hands in her lap.

"Has Aleck French gone back to his wife?" she asked suddenly.

"No," Dorothea replied, without looking up.

"Is he going to get a divorce?"

"I don't know." A moment later Dorothea raised her head. "I think I'll ask him for dinner for Thursday night."

"Ask him for dinner!" Then, after considering the proposition, Mrs. Wayne went on in another tone: "Well, you may ask him if you want to—though, for my part——"

"You used to like Aleck, mother," said Dorothea, taking a fresh sheet of paper.

"I liked him before he was spoiled," Mrs. Wayne snapped.

"He seems to be much the same as ever, only a little more serious, perhaps."

"Well, I should think he would be serious."

Mrs. Wayne looked curiously at her daughter, as she often did when she thought she was not herself observed.

"I don't know where you get your disposition," she said. "You certainly didn't get it from me."



In her note to Aleck French, Dorothea said that she should not be able to go to the National Gallery the next day; she had some shopping to do with her mother; on Thursday, though, he might meet her at the Gallery, and then come home with her to dinner. She wrote just as she might have written in the old Oswego days, before she thought of becoming engaged to him. It did not occur to her that there could be anything improper in her meeting him. He must be lonely in London; he knew few people there, and he had always hated to be alone. It seemed to her that this was the time when she ought to be most kind to him. Perhaps, if she had analyzed her feelings, she would have discovered that her frank overtures of friendship were due partly to a desire to let him see how little she cared for his breach of faith. But she was too healthy to indulge much in introspection, and she wasted little time in weighing motives.

A large part of the next day was spent by Mrs. Wayne in the rooms of a fashionable dress-maker, who had undertaken to transform one of her gowns into a dinner dress. Mrs. Wayne had not worn a low-necked gown for several years, and, as she caught cold from the most

trivial causes, Dorothea was seriously concerned about the effect on her mother's health.

The gown, which had been promised for four o'clock, did not reach the lodgings till nearly six; so during the two hours preceding its arrival Mrs. Wayne was in a fever. Dorothea had difficulty in keeping her own temper, in at least not saying something disagreeable about Mrs. Ladd. When, at seven o'clock, she had put her mother into a cab and squeezed herself in, she felt a delicious sense of relief. They would at least be in time!

They proved to be ten minutes ahead of the time; when they reached the lodgings in Clarges Street, they found that the other guests had not yet arrived. Mrs. Ladd, in a gorgeous costume of Nile green, heavily trimmed with black lace, received them at the door of her drawing room, which also served as a dining room.

"It's so good of you to come," she said effusively, kissing Dorothea for the first time, after welcoming her mother. "We're going to be very informal, you know. It was the greatest piece of luck—my finding the Downes here. They're going away in a couple of weeks. They rarely stay in London after June."

Then, when Dorothea had removed her wraps, she cried :

"How stunning you are, dear! Where *did* you get that lovely frock? It looks like one of Lefèvre's. Those violets just suit you. I told Sir Hubert that violet was your colour."

Mrs. Ladd had not overpraised Dorothea's appearance. Mrs. Wayne knew that her daughter had never looked finer. Her full figure, her firm white neck, and the classic regularity of her features made her seem, the widow said to herself, almost imperial. At this moment she should be treading that crimson carpet in her white satin slippers.

Mrs. Wayne's nervousness was soothed by the thought that her campaign was developing brilliantly. The table in the middle of the room, with its linen and silver and gleaming cut glass, between palms and flowers and lighted candelabra, suggested the entrance bower to the fairyland where her daughter was destined to dwell.

Lady Downes and her son were late ; so Mrs. Wayne had plenty of time to prepare herself for meeting them. Lady Downes proved to be a small, mild-looking woman of sixty, with white hair and a complexion of almost waxlike

pallor, broken here and there by little spots of pink which Mrs. Wayne's sharp eyes discovered not to be due to art. Her son towered beside her; he was more than six feet tall, and his broad shoulders stooped slightly; his nose was large, and his lips showed red under his heavy brown mustache. His hair, just turning gray, was close-cropped and thin, and his cheeks had in them fine red veins. To Dorothea he seemed a perfect type of the well-bred, well-fed, contented Englishman. He stood awkwardly at the doorway, with an apologetic smile on his face, as his mother poured out her regrets at being so late.

"What in the world have you been doing to yourself?" cried Mrs. Ladd, offering him her hand and staring up into his face. "Where's your beard?"

"I left it in Bath last year," he replied, with a smile.

"It was getting gray and I made him take it off," Lady Downes interposed as she removed her wraps.

"I don't know whether I like it or not," said Mrs. Ladd, still regarding him.

Mrs. Wayne and Dorothea had been looking at the new arrivals, the widow with a little smile on her face, and Dorothea with her usual se-

renity. When Sir Hubert had removed his light overcoat and revealed his gleaming shirt front, Mrs. Ladd made the introductions. Sir Hubert simply bowed, and his mother smiled and shook hands with Mrs. Wayne and said, "How do you do?" Then, turning to Dorothea, she gave her a quick glance. "I'm very fond of American girls," said she.

"Where is Mr. Ladd?" Sir Hubert asked, glancing around the room, as if he thought he might have overlooked him.

"Oh, he'll be in presently. He's never in time, you know."

"I want to have some more games of chess with him," Sir Hubert explained, apparently anxious to begin at once.

"Do, by all means. It cheers him up. He gets very blue over here sometimes."

At that moment Follett Ladd entered, buttoning the last button of his waistcoat. His face was very red, and one could easily see from it that he had been having a struggle with his toilet. He bustled up to Lady Downes and shook her by the hand. Then, after greeting Mrs. Wayne and Dorothea, he turned to Sir Hubert, and his manner changed to one of jocular familiarity.



"Well, old chap, how are you? I'm going to beat you this time. I won't go back to America till I've paid you back for that thrashing you gave me last summer."

They shook hands warmly, and Sir Hubert laughed and replied :

"You'll have to come down to Broadoaks again and we'll fight it out there."

"Ah, we've got that all planned," Lady Downes interrupted, turning from Mrs. Wayne. "Mrs. Ladd and I have settled everything."

In a few moments they sat at the table, Dorothea between Follett Ladd and Sir Hubert, her mother flanked by Lady Downes and Mrs. Ladd. The three ladies fell at once into deep conference, and Dorothea could see Lady Downes glance smilingly at her every few moments.

While the soup was being served Sir Hubert turned to her and made an effort to begin conversation.

"Are you enjoying the season this year?" he asked.

"We've only just come," Dorothea replied.

"Ah!"

For a moment he tried to think of something to say ; then, as nothing occurred to him,

he turned to his soup. Presently he began again, as if there had been no break in their talk. "But you've been over before, I suppose."

"No, this is my first visit."

"Is it, really?" He stared at her blankly. "Now I should have supposed you'd been several times before."

"Why?" said Dorothea, to encourage him.

He grew thoughtful again; he seemed to be weighing the question as if it were a matter of importance.

"Well, in the first place, your voice—your—your manner," he stammered. "Not that I think the American manner isn't charming," he added in confusion. "It often is delightful. But I've noticed," he concluded, with a little smile, "that it sometimes changes when the Americans have been over here before."

This seemed to Dorothea hardly a happy speech; but she replied civilly: "The English manner is quieter than ours. I don't wonder you like it better."

He flushed again. "I must confess that we do," he replied, "but perhaps we're prejudiced: You know we're a pig-headed people. That's one of the reasons why we've got on."

Dorothea saw in this remark a chance to draw him out. He was evidently a man of little small talk, but capable of enlarging on a few topics; his own country was probably one of them.

"Do you mean that Englishmen never conform to others—that they make others do what they want them to do?"

"Exactly," he replied, apparently surprised and gratified that she had seized his point. "Englishmen go all over the world, but they're just as English in China as they are in Piccadilly. They force people to adopt their own ways wherever they can. We're not adaptable, as you Americans are."

"But we've prospered, too—a little," Dorothea said with a smile.

"Yes, and in a better way—in a broader way. That's why I believe your country is going to eclipse ours some day. Our basis is too narrow; we're in danger of toppling over."

"What's this about toppling over?" interrupted Mrs. Ladd. "Who's going to topple over? What's going to topple over?"

Sir Hubert looked awkward. "I've been telling Miss Wayne about some of my theories," he replied, with a smile.

"Hubert is becoming very advanced," said Lady Downes, glancing affectionately at her son.

"A conservative Englishman advanced!" exclaimed Mrs. Ladd, with the air of saying something humorous. "Who ever heard of such a thing?"

"He threatens to go over to the Liberals," said Lady Downes. "He has always had a great admiration for Mr. Gladstone."

Mrs. Ladd rolled her eyes. "For Mr. Gladstone!"

"I want to be on the safe side," said Sir Hubert, with an apologetic smile. "The day of conservatism and aristocracy is over."

"What heresy!" Mrs. Ladd exclaimed, glancing around the table. "In America it's just beginning."

"Then perhaps we'd better emigrate to America," said Sir Hubert, smiling at his mother.

"Oh, you needn't do that. We're Americanizing you over here. Our American girls are seeing to that."

Lady Downes turned to Dorothea with a display of her fine white teeth, and Dorothea

felt her face growing hot—why, she could hardly have told.

Sir Hubert ignored the remark, and interposed rather hastily :

“ You rich Americans are driving us out of house and home. We’re paying for the extravagance and the ignorance of our grandfathers, and your countrymen are being rewarded for their industry. Some of the finest estates in England are now in the possession of Americans, and in a few years a great many more will be turned over to them. Then the tendency of our legislation is toward the destruction of large estates, anyway.”

After this speech Sir Hubert flushed ; he was unused to taking sustained conversational flights. Dorothea wondered if the Downes could be one of the impoverished families that Sir Hubert had referred to. She did not have time to give much thought to this possibility, for Mrs. Ladd speedily took up the thread of talk.

“ But we must *have* an aristocracy. We’ve found that out in our own country, where we pride ourselves on our republicanism, or pretend to, at any rate. Our classes in America are just as marked as those in any other country.”



"Do you think so, Mrs. Ladd?" said Dorothea, to whom the social leader had turned for confirmation. She had felt that if she didn't speak she would laugh.

"Why, of course they are. There's a certain set in New York that is far more exclusive than the Prince of Wales' set in London. A great many Americans who get into the Prince of Wales' set never could get into ours."

"But we don't all consider the Prince of Wales' set the best," Lady Downes interposed gently.

"Well, it certainly sets the fashion."

Mrs. Ladd's face flushed, not merely with the exhilaration of argument, but with the pleasing consciousness that the dinner was going off well. She had been afraid that Dorothea would be icy and Sir Hubert silent, and the burden of conversation would be sustained by the two older women and herself; her husband she did not even think of in this connection; she never counted on him for social support.

Lady Downes did not reply to Mrs. Ladd's speech, and for a moment there was an awkward pause. Follett Ladd's noisy munching seemed to resound through the room. Then the social leader went on:

"I must acknowledge that the marks of distinction between the classes are more noticeable in England than in America. Here, it seems to me, every man and woman is socially labelled. You can tell a middle-class woman as soon as you look at her, and there's absolutely no room for doubt when she speaks. And, of course, the marks of the lower-class people are even plainer. There's nothing in America, for example, like your costermonger; there's no class there that he could be compared with. I have a theory that the costers are a race by themselves."

Sir Hubert smiled. "But still very English."

"Yes, English, and yet not English. They've lived in England for generations; so they've naturally acquired traits that are common to the English of the lowest class. But in some ways they are absolutely unique."

Sir Hubert did not attempt to refute Mrs. Ladd's opinion; Dorothea saw from his face that he did not take it seriously. His eyes turned to his empty plate. Lady Downes was looking at him and smiling. After the silence that followed, Mrs. Ladd resumed:

"People talk about the *nouveaux riches* of

America, but it seems to me there are plenty of *nouveaux riches* in England, too."

"Ah, yes!" Lady Downes sighed. "So many commoners have been knighted lately. Some of them are quite vulgar."

"Titles are like wine, you know," said her son, rather tritely, smiling and dropping his eyes again.

"And some of the old ones," Follett Ladd interposed, "are pretty sour. Think of old Ballington," he added, with a knowing glance at Sir Hubert.

"As an example of the virtues, I'm afraid our aristocracy is a failure," Sir Hubert laughed.

"The more we become civilized the more we are tempted," cried Mrs. Ladd, rushing to the defence of the class with which she felt she had a natural affinity.

"And the less strength we have to resist temptation," her husband added, helping himself to another piece of chicken. "Let me give you some more, Downes."

Sir Hubert raised his hand deprecatingly. Then he turned to Mrs. Ladd. "That's a great argument for civilization, isn't it?"

"Of course, we all know that civilization is

only an excuse for the luxury of the rich," she replied.

"Then we mustn't civilize our lower classes. If we do, *they'll* become luxurious," Sir Hubert laughed.

"Worse than that," Mrs. Ladd corrected. "They'll take away our luxuries."

"That's just what they are doing in England," cried Sir Hubert, with a triumphant smile. "So we agree, after all."

Mrs. Ladd flushed. "It all depends on the point of view," she said loftily.

"I must say I think the masses, as they are called, have the advantage of us," Sir Hubert went on. "They can work up, but the best we can do is to keep floating—and many of us can't even do that."

"Ah! we must make him come to America," cried Mrs. Ladd. "Then he'll change his views."

"He's been on the point of going half a dozen times," said the old lady.

"I shall surprise you one day by taking the steamer at an hour's notice."

The conversation broke into twos again, and Sir Hubert entertained Dorothea with an account of his life in the country. He disliked

the town, he said ; he came in just to be with his mother ; she would be lonely without him. Did they ever find the country dull ? Oh, no. They nearly always had a houseful of people. His mother and he thought it a great treat to be alone each year. Of course, he added, apologetically, they liked to have people with them. But it *was* good to be off by yourself once in a while, wasn't it ? And being with his mother was much better than being by himself ; she was the best company in the world ; she understood things. Some women did have a wonderful faculty for understanding things, didn't Miss Wayne think so ? Sir Hubert had never known any one whose understanding was keener than his mother's. She was keen in practical things, too ; he would rather have her advice in a matter of business than the opinion of a hard-headed businessman.

Then Dorothea, without realizing that she was doing it, led him on to tell about his life at Harrow and Oxford. He had distinguished himself at Oxford, he told her, chiefly by driving tandem ; he did not say that he had won a much greater distinction in athletics ; his broad shoulders, however, made her suspect that he



had. He related some amusing stories of men who were at the university with him and had since become eminent in politics.

"I'm one of the do-nothings," he said. "I've simply stood aside and watched those chaps forging ahead. In America, I suppose, you don't have people like me. You all forge ahead, or you try to. After all, it's the trying that's the important thing, isn't it?"

Presently Mrs. Ladd drew away from the table, and the others, following her example, sat about, sipping their coffee. Mrs. Ladd engaged Sir Hubert, and Lady Downes took her place beside Dorothea. Mrs. Wayne was obliged to cope with the husband of her hostess.

"I think you must be a very wonderful person," said Lady Downes. "You've made my son talk. I don't think I've ever heard him talk so much as he did to-night. You must have inspired him."

"It was Mrs. Ladd, I think. She's so clever," Dorothea replied with a smile.

"Ah, but he's been at table with Mrs. Ladd before and hardly opened his mouth except to eat. I'm sure it was you."

Then Lady Downes proceeded to discourse

about her son. He had always been so good; he had done wonders for the estate. When it passed into his hands it was terribly impoverished; but he had devoted himself heart and soul to improving it and removing the debt. Of course, he hadn't been able to remove all the debt; it would take years to do that. He was very much interested in agriculture—in scientific agriculture. If Miss Wayne could only see Broadoaks, she would like it, Lady Downes felt sure; all Americans liked it. She herself was very fond of Americans; they were so clever, and *so* adaptable. Miss Wayne and her mother must come down to Broadoaks some time—for a few days. It was only one hour from London; they wouldn't find the journey fatiguing. Mrs. Ladd was coming soon; perhaps they would come then.

"We go away the week after next," Lady Downes added. "Hubert is so anxious to get back to the country. I have one of my last 'at homes' next Saturday. I do wish you and your mother would come. But before then I'll come to see you if I may. I'm very fond of young people," she said with her soft smile. "I'm sure we shall be the best of friends.

## XI.

ON their way home Dorothea could see that her mother considered the evening a success.

"Lady Downes is coming to-morrow," said the widow, with a suggestion of triumph in her tone, her voice vibrant above the noise of the carriage wheels. "Of course, you'll stay in."

"But I promised to go to the National Gallery," Dorothea replied.

"Promised? Who did you promise?" Mrs. Wayne asked, becoming ungrammatical in her excitement.

"Aleck French said he would show me the Correggios."

"Aleck French! Always Aleck French! I'm sick of hearing his name. I should think you'd have a little pride!"

"I can write him a note or send him a telegram."

Mrs. Wayne subsided into a corner of the

carriage. "She said she'd bring her son," she remarked a moment later, as if there had been no break in her talk about Lady Downes. She had a habit of ignoring her unpleasant interludes with her daughter ; they seemed to make no impression on her.

As Dorothea offered no reply, her mother resumed : "What did you think of him ?"

"I liked him."

"Don't you think he's handsome ?"

"No, not handsome. His nose is too large."

"I like that. It's a sign of generosity, they say."

"He seemed to me rather fine-looking," Dorothea admitted.

"Well, he's a gentleman, anyway," said Mrs. Wayne, as if putting an end to an argument.

The next day the callers appeared. Sir Hubert had lost his fluency of the night before ; what he did say was confined chiefly to commonplace. Lady Downes, however, was all small talk and sweetness ; she was charmed with the lodgings, and became enraptured over Dorothea's pictures, which she had insisted upon seeing ; Mrs. Ladd, she explained, had told her how wonderful they were. Sir Hubert looked at them intently, and said a few words of con-

ventional praise which convinced Dorothea that he disliked them.

When he left with his mother, who made Mrs. Wayne promise to come early on Saturday afternoon, Dorothea very nearly lost her temper. She gathered in a heap the canvases, which had been scattered along one side of the room.

"Never ask me to show these to any one again, mother."

"Never show them to any one again! Why not?"

"Because they're not worth showing. Those people knew how bad they were. They see too many pictures not to know the difference between good work and bad."

"Why, Lady Downes was delighted with them. She told me so in the hall. She thinks you have genius."

"Genius!" Dorothea repeated, scornfully.

"The English don't flatter, whatever you may say of them. They're the bluntest people in the world. Mrs. Ladd——"

"Yes, I know they are. That's why Sir Hubert had so little to say about my work. He knew he couldn't say anything good; so he kept still."



"I'm sure he said it was capital. That's the very word he used."

The next day Mrs. Wayne was ill with neuralgia. She didn't get up till noon, and Dorothea decided to postpone her visit to the gallery; but early in the afternoon her mother urged her to go out; she would herself take a nap on the lounge.

"You can bring Aleck French back to dinner, if you want to," she said, in a conciliatory tone. "I guess he won't mind my being a little out of sorts. I'd like to see him again."

Dorothea was not surprised by this concession. It was characteristic of her mother's inconsistency; besides, it was probably due directly to a touch of homesickness which had manifested itself in the morning by a sudden fit of weeping. With Aleck she could talk over friends in Oswego.

When she reached the gallery she found French in the Turner room, and there they remained for more than an hour. Then Dorothea decided not to look at the Correggios; she felt too tired. French suggested that they take a walk in Hyde Park. He called a cab, and after reaching the park they spent another hour

in sauntering about and in watching the carriages that passed in Rotton Row.

"This isn't the best time to see the fashionable people," he said. "You ought to come some morning. Then they are all out. Eleven o'clock's the swell hour for driving this year."

Dorothea was interested in the appearance of the women that she saw in the carriages. Most of them wore a superabundance of hair, and both in their hair and on their faces many displayed the effects of art. She had heard that the Englishwomen were fresh and wholesome looking, but these people were certainly neither.

"The fashionable women that you see in London aren't typical Englishwomen," said French, when she had told him her impressions. "They're all dried up by late hours, and spoiled by the horrible trick of making up that seems to be the style here now. Just see how many red-haired women there are. Next year they'll have yellow hair—or green," he laughed.

"But where *are* the typical Englishwomen?"

"In the country, looking after their families."

"I think Lady Downes must be one of them," she said absent-mindedly.

Then she told him about the dinner at the Ladds'. With regard to Sir Hubert, she found herself taking a satirical tone. She described his appearance and his manners, and she repeated passages in the conversation at table that had amused her.

"Your mother will be wanting to marry you off to some of these titled people," French said, with a smile that did not appear joyous.

"I shall never marry any one, Aleck," she replied, bending over and making lines in the earth with her parasol.

He followed the movement of the parasol with his eyes.

"I always thought you were too good for *me*."

She rose from the seat. "Please let us not talk about these things any more, Aleck," she said with a sigh.

They walked in the park till it was time for them to go to Mandeville Place for dinner. As they approached the house French grew silent. Dorothea saw that he felt nervous about meeting her mother; but when he entered the drawing room the widow received him as she might have done in the old Oswego days, only with more enthusiasm. She treated him with a tact

that surprised Dorothea, and evidently touched her old admirer. Mrs. Wayne made no reference to his marriage, but when, about eleven o'clock, he went away she followed him to the door and urged him to come soon again.

"You must come some time when Dorothea's away," she added. "Then we can have one of our old talks."

After the door closed upon him, however, she spoiled for her daughter the effect she had made during the evening.

"He's a perfect wreck, isn't he?" she said. "You were lucky to get rid of him."

Mrs. Wayne's vivid imagination had evidently read into Aleck French's appearance what she conceived ought to be a result of his misfortune. To Dorothea he presented no sign of a wreck. Of course he couldn't be very happy; but he probably painted as well as he ever did. After a time he would probably get a divorce, marry some one else, and become cheerful and commonplace again. This was a prosaic view to take of him, but she felt sure that it was the right one. As for the other reference of her mother's, that repeated itself in her mind as she drove the next afternoon to the Downes' in Chelsea. Though they had prom-

ised to come early, it was nearly five o'clock when they reached there. The house was small and plain, painted white with yellow trimmings. On one of the stone posts of the gateway "Grasmere" was printed in large letters. The front door opened into a large, meagrely furnished room, with an enormous brick fireplace on one side. On the chairs lay a number of silk hats, and from above came a murmur of voices.

"I'm afraid we're very late," Mrs. Wayne whispered, as they went up the winding stairs.

They found that the drawing room was crowded, and they had to stand for a moment near the door, waiting till Lady Downes should notice them. Dorothea could see Sir Hubert's broad back in one corner of the room, and she could catch glimpses of a woman's dress behind it.

When Lady Downes emerged from the group that had been surrounding her, she smiled and rustled up toward the doorway.

"I'm so glad you found your way here," she said, taking Mrs. Wayne's hand. "Did you have any trouble?" she asked when she turned to Dorothea. "It's a little remote, you know. We find it inconvenient sometimes. It isn't our own place; we've just rented it from the Bur-



tons. They're in Switzerland now. What a delightful evening we had at the Ladds'!" she cried, glancing from mother to daughter. "Mrs. Ladd is such a good hostess, isn't she? It seems to me all American women are. I never knew Hubert to talk so much; but I've told you about that. He's hardly spoken a word since. Perhaps you can draw him out again."

Lady Downes led the ladies into the centre of the room, where she presented them to the group of people standing under the chandelier.

"We have a great many American friends," said a fat little man to Dorothea. "Mrs. Wendell and I are always glad to meet them. We quite look forward to seeing them every summer. What part of America do you come from?"

When Dorothea explained that she came from Oswego, but had been living in New York during the past winter, he went on:

"Then I wonder if you know a very dear friend of ours. There he is now. See, the gentleman just shaking hands with Lady Downes."

Dorothea looked quickly across the room and saw a tall, fashionably dressed young man bowing before her hostess and clasping her

hand high in the air. For a moment she did not recognise the figure; then the sound of a familiar voice made her face flame. She turned to her new acquaintance, and said:

"Yes, I think I know him. It's Mr. Boyd, isn't it?"

"Yes, Mr. Harrington Boyd. He's one of the cleverest of your younger writers, don't you think so?"

"I didn't know that he was still in London."

He did not observe the evasion. "He's staying a little later than usual, I think."

Harrington Boyd had edged away from Lady Downes, and was shaking hands with a tall woman beside Mrs. Wayne.

"I'm enchanted to meet Mrs. Wendell again," he said, with mock solemnity. "When did her ladyship deign to return to town?"

"Mrs. Wendell and he are old friends," said the little man, smiling. "They once wrote a short story together."

Dorothea kept her eyes on Harrington Boyd. Mrs. Wendell presented him to Mrs. Wayne, and he looked startled.

"Is it possible?" she heard him say. "How delightful! I didn't know you were over here. Is Miss Wayne with you?"

At that moment his glance met Dorothea's, and she felt her face growing hot again.

"This *is* a pleasure," he said, hurrying to her. "Have you been over long?"

"Less than a week," Dorothea replied, feeling the awkwardness that the presence of Harrington Boyd always caused her.

Boyd could not conceal the surprise that he felt in finding her in Lady Downes' drawing room. Indeed, his next speech would have betrayed this, even if his manner had not.

"Lady Downes never told me that she knew you," he said reproachfully.

"Perhaps you haven't seen her since she met us. That was only a few days ago."

"You have been making hay over here, haven't you?" he continued, with a smile that did not compensate for the rudeness of the speech.

Wendell had been standing by and smiling, as if he were enjoying the meeting of Harrington Boyd and Dorothea even more than Boyd himself.

"He's so glad to see you," said he to Dorothea, "that he forgets all about his old English friends."

"Oh, Wendell! How *are* you? I beg your pardon. Of course, I'm delighted."

"Oh, never mind me," returned Wendell; "I'll come back to Miss Wayne presently. I'll not spoil your *tête-à-tête*."

"It *is* such a pleasure to see you," Boyd repeated, turning to Dorothea again. "I didn't even know you were going to be in London this year. Of course, you're enjoying it immensely."

"I think I *shall* enjoy it," she replied vaguely.

"I'm glad you know Lady Downes. You meet all kinds here, the fashionable and the artistic and the literary. Not so many literary people as at some other places, perhaps; but it's all the better for that. I think that Mrs. Wendell and I are about the only representatives of the guild here."

"I haven't seen much of your work lately," said Dorothea, with a nervous feeling that she must keep the conversation going.

"No, I haven't been publishing much. I'm on a big thing now—something out of my usual line." Then he asked suddenly: "Have you met many of the people?"

Dorothea shook her head.

"We came only a few minutes ago."

"Some of them are great swells. See that woman your mother is talking to now? That's Lady Bloomsbury. She has three distinctions: she's one of the richest women in England, she belongs to one of the oldest families, and she's the worst-dressed woman in the United Kingdom. See that horrible red gown she's got on. She's a terrible pessimist; her husband's made her so; he's a rake. They say she pays him a thousand pounds a year to live away from her."

Dorothea glanced at the thin figure in red. Lady Bloomsbury was hardly more than thirty, but her face lacked all suggestion of youth. The features were regular, the eyes large and black, and her coarse black hair grew low on her forehead. She was certainly as unattractive as her ill-fitting clothes, but there was something interesting in her face. She was talking with Mrs. Wayne listlessly, as if she were bored. Once she glanced toward Dorothea, and betrayed the subject of Mrs. Wayne's loquacity.

"The man behind your mother, that big fellow, is Lord Marquand, the Liberal-Unionist M. P. He's talking with Miss Leighton. Stunning creature, isn't she? That blonde type of



Englishwoman is the only kind that can compare with our American girls for beauty. See those heavenly gray eyes! She's turning the whole battery on him, isn't she? He's a great catch. He's rich and well-born, and he's going up. Her face has a childlike ingenuousness; everything surprises her."

"She's very lovely," said Dorothea.

"And she's really clever, and her mamma is even cleverer. They haven't much money, but they go to the best tailor in London. It's economy in the end," he laughed. "Haven't you ever seen her pictures in the shop windows? They say she gets a commission on them."

Dorothea felt uncomfortable; she did not enjoy hearing such "smart talk" as this from a man. It was bad enough to be obliged to listen to it from other women.

"I'm afraid you are very *blasé*," she said, with a smile.

"Everyone is—in London. 'Abandon all illusions, ye who enter here,' is written over every London drawing room. If you go through a London season you'll become *blasée*, too."

"Oh, I hope not."

Mrs. Wayne presently made her way

over to Dorothea, followed by Lady Bloomsbury.

"I've asked your mother to present me," said the countess, without waiting for the introduction. "I've heard so much about you from Lady Downes."

"I'll take myself off for the present," said Boyd. "But do let me come to see you, won't you? I may not have a chance to speak to you again. Where are you staying?"

Dorothea gave him the address, resenting the advantage he had taken of her, and he bade her a smiling farewell. Lady Downes then came up, followed by a white-haired man with a very youthful face, whom she presented to Mrs. Wayne as a compatriot. Dorothea was thus left for several minutes alone with Lady Bloomsbury. They talked about London and about America, which Lady Bloomsbury was anxious to see.

"The Bowmans have asked me to pay them a visit next spring," she said. "They are some American friends of mine; they live in Washington. But I'm afraid I shan't be able to go. I shouldn't care much about visiting the American cities, anyway. I fancy they must be very like our own. I should like to go out West,

and live in the wilds—rough it, as you say. I'm so tired of town life. Now all this bores me to extinction," she added, with a wave of her hand. "It's the same thing, the same people all the time."

"But you must meet new people occasionally," Dorothea remarked with a smile.

"Yes, but they are really old people with new faces. Society is reducing us all to the same type. Heaven knows what humanity will be like if society continues as it is a few generations longer. Now and then, of course, one finds men and women who keep themselves human—who don't allow themselves to be turned into machines of convention. But people like that are rare."

Dorothea could not help smiling again.

"Mr. Boyd has just told me that London makes people *blasés*. I'm afraid it's true."

"Ah, my dear child," Lady Bloomsbury smiled in reply, "it's the wickedest city in the world. They say Paris is wicked, but it's innocent compared with London. A very small number of people give Paris its reputation; but it seems to me that in London, in the society where you'd expect to find the best thought and the best types of character, there's something

insidiously unwholesome—something that destroys your faith in everything. Culture doesn't mean morality, my dear. You'll find that out when you're as old as I am."

Dorothea was amused at this touch of patronage. Lady Bloomsbury could not be, at most, more than three or four years older than herself; but she had unconsciously assumed the superiority that every married woman feels to unmarried women of their own or less than their own age.

"I don't quite understand why one should expect culture to make people moral," said Dorothea. "Culture and morality are quite different, it seems to me."

Lady Bloomsbury glanced at her sharply.

"If we don't improve by education," she replied, "I don't see how we are to improve."

"But there are other ways of improving besides improving morally, aren't there?" said Dorothea, alarmed at being launched so suddenly upon an ethical discussion. "The uneducated poor people that I have known seem to me quite as good as any other people."

"Ah, my dear, it's a great question." Lady Bloomsbury indicated by this speech that the subject was too great to be discussed at that

moment, and Dorothea was quite willing to drop it. "You Americans think for yourselves, don't you? That's what I like about you. You must come over to see me some afternoon, and we'll talk things over. I want you to tell me all about your work. I've heard so much about it. Perhaps I'll get you to paint my portrait, if you're as clever as Lady Downes says you are."

As she made her way toward Lady Downes, Dorothea stood alone in front of the fireplace. Harrington Boyd and Wendell, who were talking together, saw her, and both hurried toward her. Lady Downes, however, took her away and presented her to a white-haired dowager who had asked for an introduction.

In a few minutes Dorothea found herself surrounded; every one that she met wanted to talk to her about America, and she felt as if she were labelled. It was not until her mother told her they must go that Sir Hubert presented himself before her.

"But you aren't going now," he cried. "I haven't had a chance to talk with you."

"But we must. We've stayed a long time," she replied. "You ought to have come up before," she added, with a smile.



"I'm so very sorry." He apologized as if the matter were very serious. "I saw that you were so occupied—I didn't dare to intrude. But you'll at least let me go down to the door with you and put you in a hansom."

Dorothea was vexed with him for not having come up, and she said to herself that it was just like an Englishman to be shy and awkward; an American would have been far more attentive. Now she felt ashamed of the pettiness. Why should Sir Hubert have given her more attention than any one else? He had so many people to speak to that it was only natural he should overlook a few.

In spite of her reasoning, however, she was in ill humour when she returned home. The necessity of hiding this from her mother at dinner deepened her depression, and she went to bed early with the unpleasant consciousness of having passed a day of disappointment.

## XII.

THE next three weeks were an exciting period for the Waynes. Several of the ladies they had met at the Downes' called on them, and invitations for dinners and cards for "at homes" soon followed, most of them from people they hardly knew. One of the dinner invitations came from Lady Downes, another from the Countess of Bloomsbury. Dorothea was much amused by her social success, and she continued to give humorous descriptions of her experiences to Aleck French.

Mrs. Ladd, who called at Mandeville Place at least three times a week, could not conceal her elation.

"There are very few Americans that are taken up here as you've been," she said to Dorothea. "It's very easy to get into some of the sets over here, but not into Lady Bloomsbury's."

The Downes, instead of leaving for Broad-

oaks when they had planned, decided to remain in town till the middle of July. Even then the season gave no sign of waning, for the pleasant weather kept people in London. Sir Hubert called frequently at Mandeville Place, sometimes with his mother, more often alone. During these calls he was very silent, but Mrs. Wayne kept the conversational ball in motion.

One afternoon when her mother had gone to lunch with Mrs. Ladd, Dorothea resolved to do some work on one of her unfinished pictures. It was the first time she had glanced at them since the day she had shown them to Lady Downes and Sir Hubert. For a long time she painted steadily; then the light grew dim, and she resolved to go for a walk. The air was pleasantly cool; she could hardly realize that it was the month of July; in America the heat was probably intense. She looked at her watch, and found that it was nearly five o'clock. She should have time for a walk in the park if she took a hansom.

When she arrived at the park she got out and proceeded to walk rapidly. She did not observe the figure of a fashionably dressed young girl, who looked up with surprise and de-

light in her face as she passed. The girl followed her with her eyes for a moment, and then rose quickly and pursued her; she reached Dorothea near the corner, and touched her on the arm.

"Why, Miss Flagler!" cried Dorothea.

"I thought it must be you!" the girl exclaimed joyously. "You didn't notice me as you passed."

"I didn't see you," Dorothea explained as she took Miss Flagler's hand. "How long have you been here?"

"I sailed about a fortnight after you did. I would have come to see you if I'd known your address."

Dorothea turned toward the bench that Miss Flagler had just left. "Let us sit down," said she.

The girl had a great deal to say about her experiences since her departure from New York. She had been sketching at Barbizon, and had just run over to London for two or three days with a few members of her party. No, Mr. Roberts hadn't come. He'd been obliged to stay at Barbizon with the class. Miss Flagler had promised to meet her chaperon, Mrs. Dean, and her husband, in the park at five

o'clock; she'd been waiting nearly an hour. Then she and the Deans were going to dine at the Criterion. It was lively there at night; all kinds of people went, and they had a good *table d'hôte* for three shillings and six, with music. And, oh, Mr. Roberts had been so nice and attentive ever since they came away! Miss Flagler looked very knowing, and Dorothea drew conclusions, but did not ask questions. When Dorothea had given an account of her own movements, the girl cried:

"Of course, you know Mr. French is in London, don't you? Can you let me have his address? I want to send him a card to let him know where we are when he returns to Paris."

When Dorothea gave the address, she uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"Russell Square! Why, that's quite near us. I suppose he told you the news about his wife? Isn't it terrible?"

"No, he hasn't told me any news about her. I don't know what you mean."

"Mrs. Swayne wrote me from Paris. She's in the St. Lazare Hospital. They say she's dying—Mr. French's wife, I mean."

The blood left Dorothea's face.

"Dying?" she repeated.



Miss Flagler's black eyes were fixed upon her.

"Yes, Mrs. Swayne had it from the D'Arcys."

"I don't believe he knows about it," said Dorothea.

"Mrs. Swayne wondered about that. But she said it was none of her business, and she didn't propose to tell him."

Miss Flagler then launched into talk about Aleck French's wife; as Dorothea had heard most of it before she did not care to listen to it again. Indeed, she did not hear more than half the girl was saying.

"Aleck French's wife is dying!" These words kept repeating themselves in her mind. Then she began to ask herself what she ought to do. Ought she to tell him? She thought of Mrs. Swayne's remark, that it was none of her business. Then was it any of *her* business? Would it not be indelicate of her to say anything about it to him? Her indecision gave her a feeling of repulsion for Miss Flagler. She wanted to hurry from the park, to be alone and walk fast, to decide definitely what to do.

"Aleck French's wife is dying!" She felt angry that the woman should be dying, then

that she should ever have lived. What right had she had to entrap Aleck? Then, why should she herself be dragged into this? The next moment she was ashamed of her feeling; but she still wanted to get away from Miss Flagler. She cut short the conversation, saying she must hurry home.

Afterward she realized that in her desire to be alone she had treated the girl almost rudely. She hurried out of the park, her mind in tumult and torment. Although it was nearly half past six, she decided to walk home. Ought she to let him know? she kept asking herself. She must decide before she reached home. When halfway home, she was still undecided. Oxford Street was crowded with people, and, though she walked fast, she had to make her way slowly. Suddenly she came face to face with a telegraph messenger.

"Can you take a message for me?" she asked.

He nodded.

"Then come into this doorway and I'll write one."

He followed her and offered a telegraph form. She held it against her cardcase and wrote:

“Miss Flagler has just told me that your wife is dying in Paris, in the hospital of St. Lazare. DOROTHEA.”

When the boy had taken the telegram and disappeared in the surging crowd she felt relieved and hurried in the opposite direction, as if anxious to put distance between the messenger and herself. On reaching home she found the curtains of the drawing room drawn and Wood hovering about the table, lighting the candles. Only one plate was laid.

“Has my mother gone to bed, Wood?” she asked, throwing off her wraps and breathing hard.

“Yes, miss. She told me to tell you she had a headache.”

“Isn’t she going to eat anything?”

“She said I might bring her in a little of the broth.”

Dorothea sat down and spread her napkin in her lap. Her cheeks were glowing from her walk, and she felt nervous and excited; she could not help thinking it was fortunate that her mother had taken to her bed, her refuge in all trials. Of course, Aleck French, after receiving the telegram, would appear in the lodgings as

soon as he could; if her mother were present it would be impossible for him to discuss the situation. It would be odious if she were obliged to follow him into the hall and whisper the details of Miss Flagler's information. The telegram would probably reach him in an hour, and it would take him half an hour to reach Mandeville Place. She looked at her watch, and saw that he could not come before eight at the earliest.

She ate little, and when she surrendered her fish, which she left almost untouched, Wood looked grieved.

"You haven't any appetite to-night, miss."

"No, I don't feel hungry."

"I always like to see people eat well," Wood continued, as he laid the plate on the sideboard. "Nothing makes me so happy as to please people, miss."

"You please me very much, Wood," said Dorothea. "My mother and I have often spoken of the good service you and your wife give us."

Wood's sad thin face lighted with pleasure.

"Thank you, miss," he said softly.

Dorothea was too depressed to be amused by this episode; she could think of nothing ex-

cept the call that she expected. When she had finished dinner she told Wood that if any one came during the evening her mother was not to be disturbed.

"The sleep will do her good," she added, feeling guilty.

For the next hour she was unable to interest herself in anything; she couldn't even keep still.

Eight o'clock struck and he did not appear; between eight and nine the door bell rang several times. After each time she listened for Wood's tap without hearing it.

At ten o'clock she told herself that he would not come; he had taken the night train for Paris. The house grew quiet and the only sound she could hear was the rolling of cabs on the pavement.

At twenty minutes past ten the bell rang again, and Dorothea heard Wood gliding through the hall. She listened, and recognised Aleck French's voice. Then she opened the door to receive him. As Wood turned away she put one finger on her lips.

"Mother has gone to bed," she whispered.

His face was pale, and his eyes had an expression that she had never seen in them be-



fore ; he looked as if some one had just insulted him.

"I only got your telegram a few minutes ago," he said. "I came right over in a cab. When did you see Miss Flagler?"

"This afternoon in the park."

"Did she—did she tell you anything else?"

"No. She didn't know anything else. I told you all she told me."

For a moment he stood without speaking. Then he looked at her quietly.

"Don't you think you'd better sit down?" he said.

She sat on the window seat, and he took a place beside her. He wore a light overcoat, and as he leaned forward he held his brown Derby between his hands.

"I don't know what to do," he said.

"It seems to me there's only one thing to do."

He looked up quickly into her face. "What's that?" Then he looked down again.

"Go to her."

"Go to her!" he repeated almost scornfully. "A lot of good that would do." Then he raised his head again. "I don't believe she's dying," he cried passionately. "It's a trick. It's one

of her games. Oh, she's tried that kind of thing on me before. She did it once too often."

Dorothea waited a moment before she replied :

"I don't see how it can be a trick. Miss Flagler could have no motive in telling me, and Mrs. Swayne couldn't have any in telling *her*."

"Mrs. Swayne—who is Mrs. Swayne? I've never heard of her before."

"I don't know anything about her," said Dorothea, with a touch of resentment in her tone.

He fixed his eyes on the carpet again, and kept them there for several minutes. Dorothea could hear the regular ticking of the clock on the mantelpiece, and she tried to resist the temptation to count the beats; she kept saying to herself that she had no right to urge him to go to his wife; he must know better than she could what his duty was; nevertheless, she was determined that he should go.

When he spoke again there was a suggestion of struggle in his voice.

"I suppose you're right. I ought to go. She's my wife—she—I've married her."

His hat rolled on the floor, and he covered his face with his hands.

"I hope she *will* die!" he groaned.

"Aleck!"

Then he subsided, and she waited for him to make up his mind what to do. When he looked up she thought his generosity had won; he seemed more at ease than he had been since he entered the room.

"I can't possibly go," he said. "It wouldn't do any good. I'll send her money."

He picked up his hat and rose as if about to leave.

"I think you'll be sorry," said Dorothea, rising too.

For an instant he seemed shaken.

"I don't think you can—I don't believe you can understand the circumstances."

"I understand that she is a woman—and your wife. If she has made you—if she has wronged you, it will be all the more generous of you to forgive her."

"There are some things a man can't forgive," he said doggedly, passing his hand across his hat.

"Then men are less generous than women. Women forgive men a great many things——"

His face, which had been very pale, turned scarlet, and when she saw the interpretation he

had put upon her words her own face flushed, too.

He looked away from her.

"I know I'm a coward," he said.

"I don't believe you are a coward, Aleck. And if you will go to your wife now you'll show that you are not."

"I swore I'd never go near her again. I stood it as long as I could. I know how it seems to you——"

"You surely don't consider such an oath as that binding?" she said, cutting him short.

"It would be too late to go now, anyway," he replied, taking his gloves from his pocket. "The last train has left. I'll think about it to-night, and if I decide to go, I'll start in the morning."

She was about to let him leave the room, but when he offered her his hand and said, "I'm sorry that you've been dragged into this business," a sudden impulse moved her to make another appeal:

"I want you to promise me to go, Aleck. If your wife is dying it can do you no harm, and it may do her good. At any rate, it will be a satisfaction to you afterward that you've done it."

He seemed to be absorbed in rubbing his glove on his right hand, and he kept his eyes away from her face.

"You know I'd do anything in the world for you," he replied, "except that."

"Then you don't care for my good opinion?"

He was standing in the middle of the room, staring at his hands. His gloves were tight, and he had trouble in getting them on. As he laboured over the second one, he seemed to be considering her question. As he buttoned it, he said :

"Shall I lose your good opinion by not going?"

"You'll certainly gain it if you go."

He flushed again and looked into her face.

"I believe that you are the best woman in the world," he said.

"Then you will go, Aleck?"

"Yes."

She impulsively extended her hand again.

"Good-bye. I am sure you'll be glad some day."

He held her hand for a moment and then walked to the door. There he turned and said :

"I'll write to you from Paris."

Dorothea stood still until she heard the out-



side door close and his steps die away up the street. Then she lighted one of the candles on the mantel and turned out the gas. But instead of going to her room she went to the window and opened the curtains.

The street was deserted save for the presence of a policeman, who was standing in front of the house in the light of the gas lamps. She was wondering if Aleck French was walking home; he would probably sit up late, packing. Then she tried to imagine what would happen to him the next day; after reaching Paris she thought of him as taking a cab and going at once to the hospital of St. Lazare. The white haggard woman with feverish black eyes that she pictured to herself lying on a cot—surely *she* didn't belong to Aleck! What a feeling of loathing he would have as he approached her and spoke to her in her own language! Of course he spoke of it badly; it seemed to her absurd that he should speak it at all; his natural tongue was English, with a marked American accent.

When she reached the corridor leading to her room she heard Wood's discreet tap. She tiptoed back, and without opening the door asked him softly what he wanted. He replied that he wanted to know if miss wouldn't take a

light luncheon before going to bed; he had some cold chicken and some claret for her. Dorothea smiled and thanked him, and said she didn't care to eat anything. Then she went quietly into her mother's room. Through the darkness she could see two shining eyes.

"I thought you were asleep, mother," she said.

"So I was, but I woke up a few minutes ago. Didn't I hear you talking with some one?"

"Wood came to ask if I wanted something to eat."

"Oh!"

"Good-night, mother."

"Good-night."

### XIII.

DOROTHEA slept badly, and woke so early in the morning that she had to wait an hour before her mother was ready for breakfast. In order to distract herself, she devoted this hour to painting. When the clock struck nine she thought of Aleck French as probably getting ready for Paris. Her mother had promised to go shopping with Mrs. Ladd in the afternoon; Mrs. Ladd was to call for her at half past two. To escape the call Dorothea took herself off to South Kensington Museum, which she had not yet visited.

There she found a number of people standing in groups in front of the larger canvases, or strolling listlessly from one picture to another. Some of the pictures she knew through copies, and these she was glad to see in the originals. After looking at several of them she was attracted by a small reproduction of a Greek temple by a Dutch artist whose work she rec-

ognised at once. A tall man in a frock coat was bending before it and examining it closely. She stood a few feet behind him at one side. The work seemed to her admirable in composition and colouring; the gleaming white marble of the temple was perfectly reproduced and stood out against the deep-blue sky; on the steps were a group of girls, holding poppies in their hands; even the petals of the flowers had been clearly outlined and painted. The man in front of the picture seemed to become suddenly aware of Dorothea's presence, for he turned quickly and said:

"Oh, I beg—Miss Wayne? Is it possible?"

"I didn't recognise you," she said, taking his hand, and losing her composure for an instant.

"I don't often turn my back to you," Sir Hubert laughed.

"Do you like it?" she asked, indicating the picture, to hide her embarrassment.

"Yes, very much—though, I confess, I don't approve of it. This is just the kind of work the conservatives would like."

"Yes. The technique is wonderful," she said.

"It's like one of the old masters, isn't it? Most of the new men seem to despise detail."

"I sometimes think it is pure laziness on their part," said Dorothea, with a smile. "They don't want to take the trouble to be thorough."

This remark seemed to strike him as humorous, for he laughed immoderately. "I shall tell Wilson about that. You know his work, I suppose? He's mad on the subject of impressionism. He's the one that converted me years ago."

"We shall have to bring you back to the true faith," she said, with a smile.

"I acknowledge that *some* of the impressionist work seems ridiculous to me. I saw a new picture of Faure's the other day and I couldn't make out what it was. It seemed to consist of a purple haze, and it might have passed for half a dozen things. I believe the artist called it Winter, but I heard a lady describe it afterward as a field of heather. But when an impressionist does do a good thing, it is marvelously fine, it seems to me."

"When a genius is an impressionist I can't help admiring his work," said Dorothea, smiling. "But don't you think that impressionism gives an excuse to painters that haven't genius



to do things carelessly and to substitute eccentricity and affectation in place of it?"

"I dare say you are quite right. I shall want to think that over."

"But I really know very little about it," said Dorothea, feeling that she had been altogether too didactic. "I've had it dinned into my ears all my life that only the work that was perfect in detail could last."

"But the impressionist would say that there's no such thing as perfection in detail, unless it means that detail should be subordinated perfectly. It's quite confusing to a layman—all these contradictory theories about art."

"It's confusing to those who try to paint a little, too. That's why I pin my faith to one school."

"I suppose that's the safest way."

They had been standing in front of the Dutchman's picture and Sir Hubert turned to it again and pointed out bits in it that seemed to him especially fine. Then he called attention to a figure that seemed to be a little out of drawing. No one but an artist, Dorothea said to herself, would have noticed it.

"I think you must paint a little, yourself," she said.

"Only a little—a very little—in the merest amateur way."

"Did you study while you were in Paris?"

"Yes—a little. But I didn't work much, you see. I didn't go in for the thing in dead earnest, as most of the other fellows were doing. I felt as if I were a bit of a loafer, and they, of course, never considered me one of themselves."

They walked along one side of the room, stopping occasionally as a picture attracted their attention. Sir Hubert pointed out his favourites, and most of them Dorothea liked too. He knew nearly every picture in the place, he said; he had been at the museum hundreds of times. "In one respect," he added, "I'm different from most of my countrymen. I know the sights of London almost as well as a travelling American does. I suppose you've seen most of them."

Dorothea replied that she had not, as yet; she hadn't even seen the Tower.

"Then I'll take you there, if you'll let me. I'm a great authority on the Tower. I'll be almost as good as one of the guides. What do you say to to-morrow afternoon?"

"That will suit me if my mother isn't ill or hasn't anything else for me to do."

They wandered into some of the other rooms and discussed the pictures there. Dorothea was surprised by the keenness of his criticisms; it made her realize how much she herself had to learn. When it was time for her to leave the place Sir Hubert asked if he might put her down at Mandeville Place, and they entered a hansom together. It was not until Dorothea had nearly reached home that she felt uncomfortable from being in a cab in London with a man she knew so slightly.

Her mother, however, had no such scruple. It was pleasure, not annoyance, that made her exclaim, when her daughter entered the house:

"Where in the world did you pick up Sir Hubert Downes?"

"I met him at the South Kensington Museum," Dorothea replied, as she removed her cape.

"Did he speak about your going down to Broadoaks?"

Dorothea looked at her mother in surprise. "Going down to Broadoaks? What do you mean?"

"Lady Downes was at the Ladds'. She wants us to go down to Broadoaks next Saturday for a week."

"We can't go, of course."

"Can't go? Why can't we go? I'm sure it would be a great deal better than staying in this poky old place."

Dorothea's head disappeared for a moment behind the door of her wardrobe; her mother could see only her feet and the lower part of her skirt; so she addressed these:

"It seems to me you oppose everything I want to do."

"I don't want to oppose you, mother," Dorothea replied, her voice sounding as if it were muffled by the dresses in the wardrobe. "But I can't understand why you should want to go to Lady Downes'. We've only met her a few times, and we shall simply put ourselves under obligations."

"Well, we've come here to see English life, and I'd like to know how we're going to see it shut up in four walls like this. Of course, you can go round to art galleries and have a good time, while I stay at home. I know the country would do me good, and that's why——"

"Very well, mother," said Dorothea, wearily.

"If you want to go to Broadoaks I'm willing. Only I think we ought not to promise to stay more than three or four days."

Now that the victory was won Mrs. Wayne had a moment of silent complacency. Then she resumed: "It seems very strange to me that he didn't speak of it."

"He? Speak of what?"

"Of the invitation—Sir Hubert Downes."

"I suppose he wanted to give us a chance to refuse," the girl replied, controlling her irritation.

The day's adventures had tired Dorothea, and before dinner she lay on the couch in the drawing room and tried to sleep; but in spite of herself her thoughts turned again to Aleck French. It was after five o'clock; he must be in Paris by this time. She wondered what he was doing, what his feelings were; and she fancied a thousand wild impossibilities. The more she thought about him the more serious she became, and at dinner her face was flushed and she ate little; she knew that her mother was watching her covertly; so she tried to appear as unconcerned as possible. Mrs. Wayne was putting her own constructions upon her daughter's preoccupation and indifference to



food; she gave her fancy free rein, and her thoughts were quite as wild as Dorothea's.

After dinner Mrs. Wayne became immersed in a letter to the Misses Marbury, whom she had strangely neglected since her arrival in England. These ladies, however, had sent her minute chronicles of their doings; they had remained in New York two weeks after Mrs. Wayne's departure, where they had suffered from loneliness and the heat. Maple Valley, however, had surpassed in beauty even their expectations. There were some delightful people at their boarding house—Prof. Lawson and his wife, of Amherst. Prof. Lawson had written a book on biology, and he also took a great interest in mediæval history and art. They often went to walk with him in the early evenings, and he instructed them with regard to the vegetable and plant life around them. The sunsets in Maple Valley were grand. Miss Millicent attempted a description of a particularly fine one, but at the end of the sixth page she ended with the remark that, after all, it couldn't *be* described. The sisters supposed that Mrs. Wayne and Miss Dorothea were enjoying England. Had they been at the art galleries in London yet? Miss Sophia called

attention to a particularly fine picture by Herkomer in the Grafton Gallery. She had read a description of it in the Chronicle. She'd give anything in the world to be able to see it, but, as she couldn't, Mrs. Wayne must see it for her.

Mrs. Wayne, however, had no intention of doing any such thing. Indeed, the letters of the sisters disappointed her; they struck altogether too high a note. She would have preferred the personal detail. Only a sudden desire to tell them all about her daughter's social success persuaded her to reply to their communications. Now, however, that she had begun, she found herself turning over page after page of description and anecdote, beginning with an account of her meeting with Mrs. Ladd, and quoting largely from the social leader's revelations of American and English society. Then she went on to reveal the eccentricities of London life and of the English character as she had observed it, paying special reference to the Downes and to Susan, Countess of Bloomsbury, whose title had profoundly impressed her imagination. As she wrote she felt inspired by the picture that came to her mind of the fluttering agitation of the sisters when they should receive her letter; they would retire to their

room and read it aloud with many exclamations and knowing comments. In the glow of the communication she felt the spiritual exaltation that her earnest talks with them about Dorothea had always given her. She realized now, for the first time since the separation from them, how sympathetic they had been, and she blamed herself for not having answered their letters before.

At about half past nine, just as Mrs. Wayne was about to begin the climax of her disclosures, the announcement of the invitation to visit the Downes, the door bell rang. Dorothea started and dropped in her lap the book she had been trying to read.

"I wonder if that can be any one for us?" she said.

"Of course it isn't," Mrs. Wayne replied, without looking up from her writing. "This time of night!"

Dorothea heard Wood glide to the door, and a moment later he was standing before her.

"A telegram for you, miss."

Before opening it she went back to her seat. Then she quietly tore the end of the envelope and read the inclosure. Her mother was watching her.

"What is it?"

For a moment Dorothea said nothing. Then she replied: "Aleck French's wife is dead."

Mrs. Wayne looked dazed. She dropped her pen and stood up between her chair and the table.

"Dead!" she repeated.

"Yes; she died this afternoon."

Mrs. Wayne's eyes flashed, and she grew white around the lips.

"Let me see that telegram," she said.

Dorothea passed to her the thin slip of paper, and she ran her eyes over the typewritten line:

"Paris, July 27. She died this afternoon, half an hour before I got here. ALECK."

"So you knew about this?" said Mrs. Wayne, her mind flashing back to Aleck French's last call, and running here and there in search of proof for the suspicion that had taken shape in her consciousness. Aleck French had not had an opportunity to speak to Dorothea alone during his last call. Perhaps she had seen him since then. The night before, as she lay in bed, she thought she had heard his voice; now she

was sure she had, and, according to her habit, when her daughter acknowledged that she knew Mrs. French had been ill, she blurted out her conviction :

“He was here last night. I suppose,” she added sarcastically, “he came sneaking round late, when he knew I’d be in bed.”

Dorothea began to breathe hard.

“Mother !”

“Don’t call me mother,” cried Mrs. Wayne, losing all control of herself. “I’m ashamed of you. I used to think you had some sense of decency. I asked you last night if any one had been here, and you lied to me ; but that isn’t the worst you’ve done. I don’t wonder you were ashamed to tell me the truth,” she went on breathlessly, growing more angry. “Ever since you’ve been in London you’ve acted outrageously, meeting him in art galleries and all kinds of public places. Before he was married you didn’t care a snap of your finger about him—no, not a snap ! Don’t you suppose that I know how you’ve been carrying on for the last three weeks ? Now that that disgraceful woman he threw you over for is dead, I suppose you’ll want to get him back again. I should think——”



“Mother!”

Dorothea had risen from her chair, and the telegram curled on the floor in front of her where the widow had thrown it. Her face had grown white and her nostrils were quivering.

“I won’t have you talk to me like that,” she went on more quietly. “I’ve endured enough since I’ve been over here, but I won’t be insulted even by my own mother. It’s true that I did lie to you last night, but I lied simply because I knew you would put a wrong interpretation on Aleck French’s visit. You misinterpret everything I do. You treat me as if I had no self-respect, no character! You——”

Tears had been gathering in Mrs. Wayne’s eyes, and now they overflowed. “To think that you should talk to me like this!” she sobbed, throwing up her arms and then clasping her hands over her face. “My own daughter, too! To think that I should have brought you into the world and reared you, and then have you turn on me like this! I’ve never had any one talk to me so in my life!”

She threw herself in her chair and buried her face in her hands on the table. Dorothea

picked up the telegram from the floor, tore it, and dropped the pieces into the fireplace. Then she left the room and softly closed the door leading into the bedrooms, while her mother sobbed out her misery.

#### XIV.

DOROTHEA knew that her mother did not really believe the charges she had made against her, and with this knowledge she tried to console herself. The accusations still hurt, however. She ceased to think about the news that had caused the quarrel, or, rather, this was so intermingled with the quarrel that she could not think of it apart. After a time she straightened out the confusion of her thoughts, and was able to look at the situation in all its bearings. For Aleck's sake she could not help feeling glad that the woman was dead. Of course, this would have no effect upon herself.

The next morning her mother took breakfast in bed, and did not appear in the drawing room till ten o'clock; so she did not see the letter from Paris that Dorothea found at her plate.

"I had a rough passage across the channel," it said, "and I was fearfully sick. I didn't feel

much better when I reached Paris. I took a cab to the hospital, and found that she had died a little before five o'clock. She had been there a week with pneumonia, and she'd been unconscious for three days. So even if I'd gone last night, it wouldn't have done any good. I shall stay here in Paris for a few days, and see to some business things and try to make some plan for the future. I cabled father last night, but I sha'n't get an answer till to-morrow—if at all. I shall hope to see you in London again."

That was all. She felt disappointed. But what more could she have expected? He had surely given details enough. Yet she would have liked to know about the woman; she wondered if Aleck would let her see a photograph of her sometime. Then she felt ashamed of her curiosity.

Mrs. Wayne made no mention of Aleck French; she simply ignored the unpleasantness of the evening before, and proceeded to discuss the coming visit to the Downes. She had decided to take both of her new dresses; she was glad she had something decent to wear for dinner; of course, there'd be a lot of other people there.

Dorothea, on the contrary, felt unable to

display any enthusiasm over the visit ; her only reason for consenting to make it was a desire to gratify her mother. She did not like the prospect of passing four consecutive days with Mrs. Follett Ladd. For, of course, as Lady Downes had said, Mrs. Ladd would be at Broadoaks at the same time. To make sure of this unpleasant probability, she said :

“ Is Mrs. Ladd going with us ? ”

“ Is she going *with* us ? Do you suppose I'd go down there unless she was there ? It would be very funny if Lady Downes——”

“ And Mr. Ladd too ? ”

“ I don't know anything about that, but I suppose so.” A moment later Mrs. Wayne added : “ Mrs. Ladd said that Mr. Boyd had been asked.”

Two sharp eyes were upon her, but Dorothea did not flinch. She was vexed, nevertheless, and she wondered vaguely if she could not escape making the visit, if she couldn't construct a pretext for staying in London and letting her mother go without her ; but her mother, she was sure, would suspect that she wanted to stay behind to see Aleck French again. She felt as if she were caught in a net, and instead of struggling in the meshes, she resigned herself



to the situation. She would try to make the best of the visit; it would at least be amusing and she would enjoy Lady Downes. Of Sir Hubert she tried not to think much; but she could not help reflecting on Harrington Boyd's cynical observation of Mrs. Ladd's machinations. Her mother seemed to divine her thoughts, for she blurted out:

"Mrs. Ladd was very much annoyed when Lady Downes told her Mr. Boyd was going to be there."

"She used to be a friend of Mr. Boyd's."

"Well, she isn't any more. She says he hasn't any heart."

In spite of herself, Dorothea laughed.

"I don't see what there is funny about that," said her mother.

"It's funny that Mrs. Ladd has only just found it out, that's all—after knowing him for years."

"She says she's disappointed in him."

As Dorothea made no comment, Mrs. Wayne went on:

"I don't like him at all. I think he's the most affected man I've ever known."

"You used to like him well enough in Hull."

"So did you, for that matter. I should think from the way you——"

"I like him just as well now," Dorothea replied quickly, to head her mother off.

"When I compare him with a man like Sir Hubert Downes!" Mrs. Wayne exclaimed. "He *is* a man!"

Dorothea had taken her workbasket from the mantel and placed it on the table. She stood over it, so absorbed in trying to thread a needle in the dim light that she did not reply. Mrs. Wayne waited nervously till the thread had passed through the needle's eye and had been caught on the other side.

"Lady Downes told me that Sir Hubert was very much interested in you."

Dorothea sat by the table, and, after turning a kid glove inside out, began deftly to sew the end of one of the fingers.

"I'm sure that's very kind of him."

"I told her what you said about him."

Dorothea looked up quickly.

"What did I say?"

"You said you thought he was very fine-looking and interesting."

"I don't think I said that, mother. You made a mistake."

"Well, you said something like it, anyway," the widow replied irritably.

Mrs. Wayne wanted to say a great many more things, but after looking intently at her daughter, whose head was bent over the glove, she didn't dare. She was satisfied, however, that Dorothea had caught the significance of her remarks, and, in spite of the consciousness that she had been balked again, she felt an admiration for the girl's reserve. Dorothea, she said to herself, was growing more and more like her father. She wondered if duchesses wore coronets. Sir Hubert was only a baronet, but she supposed there must be some system of promotion in the British aristocracy. Lady Bloomsbury, however, was a countess, and at the dinner given by the Downes she had worn no jewelry whatever; but that might have been due to her eccentricity, to what Mrs. Ladd called her "silly affectation of democracy."

"It's the same spirit that made Marie Antoinette masquerade as a shepherdess," the social leader had remarked, and Mrs. Wayne had become convinced of the folly of the principle that all people were equal. The Downes were sufficient proof that blood would tell; Mrs. Wayne ignored the fact that blood betrayed a

great many hideous secrets; she preferred to consider the matter only in its social application. She felt sure that either in her own ancestry or in her husband's there had been a dash of noble blood, which had found expression in Dorothea's majesty. If all went well, her daughter would simply come into her inheritance.

Mrs. Wayne's happiness would have been complete if she could have threshed out her ambitions and her hopes with the Misses Marbury; but their limitations, she feared on consideration, were such that they could be of no help in a critical situation like this; they would simply rush into wild theories and fluttering suggestions of no practical value; but, at any rate, they would be able to appreciate the cloud thrown on the prospect by Aleck French.

At the thought of Aleck French Mrs. Wayne's spirits drooped; but they revived again when she remembered that Dorothea was to go to the Tower that afternoon with Sir Hubert Downes.

The next few days were spent by Mrs. Wayne in feverish agitation; Dorothea had never known her to be so active, and she was prepared at any moment to see her collapse. Dorothea's own preparations were few; she had

decided to take with her three frocks to wear by day, and two dinner dresses. Her mother would have been pleased if she had carried her whole wardrobe, but she was firm in her refusal to do this.

"We shall be there only four days, and it would be foolish to go with a lot of trunks, as if we intended to stay a month," she said.

"But they may want us to stay longer," her mother insisted.

"I think we shall have quite enough of it," Dorothea replied, to her mother's secret solicitude, for Mrs. Wayne thought she saw in the remark a threat.

"I hope you'll at least make an effort to be civil to these people," she cried, when she had weighed the speech.

"I'll behave as well as I know how," Dorothea laughed.

At Mrs. Ladd's suggestion Mrs. Wayne had planned to take an afternoon train for Penley; they would arrive at half past four and the Downes' carriage would meet them.

At Paddington Station they met Lady Bloomsbury, who, attired in one of her wonderful red gowns, seemed almost to glow in the gloom of the day.



"I've been looking for you," said the countess, walking up to them. "Lady Downes wrote me you were going down on this train. Have you bought your tickets yet? Let us go in the same carriage."

"I'll get the tickets, mother," said Dorothea. "You stay with Lady Bloomsbury."

"But mind you don't get first-class tickets. You Americans are so extravagant! I always go second."

Dorothea presently returned, tickets in hand. They found an empty second-class compartment, and took possession of it.

"I do hope no one will come in," said the countess, depositing herself in a corner. "One of these windows we'll put *down*," she went on, seizing the window strap, "and I'll take charge of the other. There are about ten tunnels between here and Penley and you have to keep pulling the window up and down. One minute you're choking and the next minute you're gasping."

When the train had started Lady Bloomsbury proceeded to give an account of the life at Broadoaks.

"Lady Downes is an ideal hostess," she said. "She has the great art of letting her guests

alone. It's always a satisfaction to me when I'm there to feel that I'm not obliged to smile at breakfast. Lady Downes has breakfast sent up to the rooms, after the Continental fashion, you know, only she gives you more to eat than they do on the Continent. It's ghastly to have to be amiable in the morning, isn't it? I always feel as cross as two sticks. It's bad enough for us to endure one another when we feel wide-awake and alive. I'm really never awake till twelve. It's a fresh shock to me when I open my eyes in the morning and find myself confronted with life again."

Lady Bloomsbury was on the watch for a tunnel, and as the train shot into one she pulled up the window with a quick movement of the strap. Then, for a few moments, they all sat back in their seats, the lights in the compartment giving the darkness a sickly pallor. When the train shot into daylight again the window fell with a bang.

"But you wouldn't want to go to bed some night and never wake again, Lady Bloomsbury?" Mrs. Wayne cried, taking up the thread of talk.

"If I answered you literally, I should say yes. I can't think of anything more delightful

than eternal sleep. But, you see, there's always the horrid possibility of waking in something a great deal worse than the 'garish day,' " she laughed.

Mrs. Wayne looked mystified; she did not understand this kind of talk. Dorothea saw at once that Lady Bloomsbury was not above talking for effect; indeed, her speeches during the rest of the journey confirmed the impression; she seemed quite unlike the straightforward, matter-of-fact woman who had offered her so much gratuitous advice at Lady Downes' reception a few days before. She kept pulling the window up and down and was silent only as the train passed through the tunnels. When Penley was reached she breathed a sigh of relief.

"I do dislike railway journeys so!" she said. "And there's good Sir Hubert waiting for us," she added, leaning out of the window.

Sir Hubert was standing on the platform of the station, eagerly scanning the first-class carriages. Dorothea saw his face light up suddenly as he hurried forward to greet some one whom she could not see. When she left the carriage she recognised the well-groomed figure of Harrington Boyd.

"I looked for you, but I couldn't find you at

first," said Sir Hubert, as he turned with a smile to Lady Bloomsbury and Dorothea.

"Haven't you known me long enough to know that I never go first-class?" cried the countess.

"Lady Bloomsbury is so fond of the middle classes," Boyd remarked, as he shook hands with Dorothea.

"That's why she came with us," Dorothea explained amiably, to the horror of her mother.

For an instant Boyd looked confused; then he added rather lamely: "I shall always travel second-class in future, Miss Wayne. You've conferred distinction on it."

Two burly countrymen were attending to the traps, and Sir Hubert led the ladies to the carriages that stood at the other side of the station. Harrington Boyd turned to give directions about his own luggage, and a moment later joined the group.

"This carriage will hold three people very comfortably," Sir Hubert was saying, "and the other I'll drive myself and take some one with me. How shall we arrange it?"

"Let me arrange it," Lady Bloomsbury interposed. "Mrs. Wayne and Mr. Boyd and I

will go in this one, and you take Miss Wayne in the other."

Every one seemed pleased with this plan save Harrington Boyd, who said nothing and looked disgruntled. Sir Hubert helped Dorothea on the seat in the little yellow cart and sprang after her.

"We'll get there a little while before they do," he said, starting the horse and turning to the ladies who were still trying to adjust themselves comfortably in the other vehicle.

The cart tipped spasmodically and Dorothea was obliged to cling to it in order to keep her balance. For a few moments Sir Hubert looked straight ahead without speaking. The horse, of a deep chestnut, with great haunches, seemed to be full of spirit. Dorothea could feel her hair flying over her forehead and her cheeks flaming; the green fields flashed on either side, the grass sparkling in the sunshine that had just broken through the clouds after a light rain. On the horizon hung a purple haze, making just the atmosphere that Dorothea had noticed in one of the pictures at the National Gallery. Here and there they passed low red-brick houses with vines running over their fronts and over the brick walls that divided one from another.



"It's going to be pleasant, I think," said Sir Hubert, when the horse had quieted to a regular trot. "We had a little shower an hour ago. I wonder if it rained on your way down. Sometimes it doesn't rain in the city when it is raining here. We get a good many showers. That's why the country is so fertile." A moment later, "It's a beastly place—London," Sir Hubert went on. "I don't understand why visitors like it so much."

"But they are apt to see it at the best season, aren't they?"

"Yes. Perhaps that accounts for it; but I know some Americans that live in London all the year round; they like it better than Paris. Many people do, for that matter—even artists. You'd expect artists to dislike it."

"I thought that most of them preferred Paris."

"They prefer it during their student days, but many of them drift over here afterward."

They had passed the little brick houses and come into a wide stretch of unbroken country; in the distance Dorothea could see between the trees the tall spires of what seemed to be a great castle. She pointed to them and asked what they were.

"That's our place," Sir Hubert replied. "We go in a roundabout way to get to it. From here it's only three miles off in a straight line, but by the road it's nearly five."

They presently turned into a road that led through a forest, under interlacing trees, with branches so thick that the sunlight could not penetrate them. The air was heavy with the odour of plants and wild flowers, and musical with the twittering of birds and the chirping of insects; the trees exhaled a delicious fragrance.

For the time Dorothea gave herself up to the enjoyment of the country. She wished that she and her mother could find a place like this, where they might pass the rest of the summer; her mother would surely thrive in this air, and she would herself find pleasure and profit in sketching the scenery. It did not occur to her that the solitude of such a place would depress her mother to such an extent as to destroy whatever physical benefit she might have from it; Mrs. Wayne's restless energy since her arrival in England seemed to indicate that excitement was the best of tonics for her.

For three miles the cart passed under the interlacing branches and Dorothea noted several bits of scenery that would have made good

studies. She thought with regret of the month she had spent in the city; all those precious weeks might have been spent in some such place as this; if she had her way she would live in the country all the year round; she was not surprised that so many English people disliked the city, as Sir Hubert did. What a delightful life he must lead here! She could not help comparing it with the lives of most of the men she knew, spent in a ceaseless effort to make money, or in a ceaseless effort to add to what they had already made. Sir Hubert, as he sat beside her, was the embodiment of healthfulness and content and repose. Though they had ridden for more than a mile without speaking he seemed not in the least embarrassed.

When they came into the open again the sun was shining. For two miles they drove along the deserted road. Then, in the distance, beside a small white cottage, Dorothea saw a wide gate stretching across the road. As they approached it, an old woman in a white muslin cap came out and opened the gate. She smiled and bowed when they entered the park; then closing the gate, she turned and watched them for a moment with the smile still on her face.

The road was smooth and hard, and wound in curves over the hill, leading to the house.

"I should like to take you over the place a bit," said Sir Hubert. "We shall have plenty of time before the others get here."

They turned into a road that ran along the side of the hill and led to an artificial lake, where three small boats lay at a miniature wharf. Beside it stood a white summer house, more than twice as large as the lodge they had just passed.

"This is where I try my hand at painting now and then," Sir Hubert explained. "I've set up a kind of studio there."

"I should like to see it some time," said Dorothea. "You know, you promised once to show me your work."

"Did I?" he laughed. "I'm afraid it isn't worth showing. But, of course, you'll see the studio. There's a special room that my mother and I have set apart for you. We thought you might like to do some work while you were here."

They drove on to a small stone structure a half-mile away. The rough stone had been blackened by centuries of damp, and with its ivy, which more than half covered the walls, it

seemed to Dorothea one of the most picturesque specimens of Romanesque she had ever seen. Sir Hubert seemed pleased with her delight over it.

"Yes, they seldom build anything just like that now," he said. "We're very proud of it. To-morrow I'll take you inside. I had the doors opened to-day to air the place. We don't use the church now. We haven't had a curate since five years before my father died. My father had a quarrel with him, and while he stayed he'd never go into the place, and he wouldn't allow the servants to go either. So the poor devil used to preach every Sunday to three or four of the old women from the village. He stayed on for three years to get the salary; he knew father wouldn't send him away. Then he got another living and went off. By that time we'd grown used to staying away on Sundays, and we never took any one in his place. Besides," he added, with a smile, "we can't afford to keep a curate of our own. When we want to go to church we drive down to Penley."

Sir Hubert turned the horse's head to the right, and drove past the summer house again and then up the hill. "This road leads to the

house. Our stables are over there," he said, pointing with his whip toward the left. "You can just catch a glimpse of them through the trees. To-morrow, if it's fine, I should like to show you our horses. We have a few good ones left; we used to have the stables full, but that was before we began to economize."

Before the top of the hill was reached, Dorothea could see the tall spires of Broad-oaks. Then the whole castle stood out suddenly before her. On first view it seemed very impressive and beautiful, though afterward she noticed in it what seemed to her serious faults of architecture. Long and narrow, with a bewildering number of turrets and towers, it was apparently of stone, and was half covered with ivy, some of which ran to the very top of the turrets.

"It doesn't look very old," said Sir Hubert, as they drove through the enormous iron gateway that led to the house, "though it was built in the tenth century. Before my grandfather tampered with it it must have been rather fine. He thought it wasn't pretty enough; so he plastered the brick over and added all these silly little ornaments that spoil the effect. He's the one that laid out our garden. You can just



see it from here. All those fountains and statues he set up, and he planned the walks and the shrubbery, too. He wanted to make a miniature Versailles out of it," he added, with a smile, "and we're paying the cost of his improvements now."

## XV.

SIR HUBERT climbed down from his seat to open the heavy iron gates leading to the house. As he mounted again and took the reins from Dorothea's hands, he said with a smile :

"In our palmy days we used to have servants do these things for us. But now we do them ourselves."

His mother was standing in the doorway, waving her hand in welcome ; the figure in outline behind her Dorothea recognised as Mrs. Follett Ladd.

"Where are the others?" cried Mrs. Ladd, as Sir Hubert helped her down from the cart.

When Dorothea explained that they were coming and had received greetings, Lady Downes led her through the dark hall and up the wide oak staircase.

"I've decided to put you on the second floor, so that your mother shall have only one flight to climb," she said. "Do you like the

sun in the morning? I hope so. I always do; I like to begin the day cheerfully."

Lady Downes threw open one of the doors in the long hall, the sides of which were decorated with old prints, and they entered a small square room furnished in red and gold. The walls were covered with a thick, dull-red paper that looked like cloth; a canopy of red satin, embroidered with gold, hung over the large oak bed. As she looked around, Dorothea gave a little cry of delight.

"Oh, how lovely!"

"Do you really like it?" asked Lady Downes, with a smile. "We don't often use this room; it seems almost too fine, too pretentious for everyday use. It's quite the grandest room in the house. There's a tradition that it was furnished to receive Queen Elizabeth; she was travelling through England and Sir Geoffrey Downes—you'll see his picture in the dining room—invited her to pass a night here. That crown on the canopy was made for her."

Dorothea came very near smiling at the thought of her mother occupying the bed where Queen Elizabeth had slept. What historic possibilities were in that! It would thrill the Misses Marbury when they heard of it, and

would furnish material for conversation for the rest of her mother's life.

Lady Downes turned to the door that led into another room and opened it.

"This is a very small place to put you into," she said, "but I thought you'd want to be near your mother."

The room was little more than half the size of the other, but it looked attractive. It was furnished very simply, in blue; on the walls were a few prints like those in the hall, and a copy of Guido Reni's Beatrice Cenci. It was really nothing more than a dressing room, but Dorothea expressed her satisfaction with it.

When Lady Downes had left her Dorothea went to the window and looked out. Below stretched a wide greensward marked with the white lines of a tennis court. At some distance away the trees were swaying on the slope of the hill and above them rose a circle of smoke. Not a house could be seen, and Dorothea had a sudden sense of loneliness.

She realized for the first time since she had been in England how far away from home she was, and she longed for familiar scenes and familiar faces. She had never been fond of Oswego, but now, in her mind, it assumed rare

attractions. She thought of the street where she lived, of the crooked trees that shaded the house in summer. Then she thought of the years she had wanted to come to Europe, of the visit to England she had planned to take with her father. If he had lived that visit would have been so different from the one she was now making. She wondered why nearly everything in England was disappointing her. Then she recalled her determination in London to make the most of her opportunities, to enjoy herself as well as she could. During her stay at Broadoaks, she resolved to keep to that; she would steal away in the morning, and make some sketches; the rest of the day she would play, as well as she could, the part her mother had forced upon her.

A few minutes later Mrs. Wayne came panting into the next room, and Dorothea went in to meet her. As soon as the servant had deposited her traps on the floor and she was alone with her daughter Mrs. Wayne looked around.

"Did you ever see anything like this before? Isn't it magnificent?" she said, in an awe-stricken voice.

Dorothea repeated what Lady Downes had told her about the apartment, and the widow

was awed into momentary silence. She wondered what Annetta Griffin would think of this ; she must write her all about it. She had a fantastic thought that it was not herself but her daughter who ought to occupy the sumptuous apartment and sleep in the royal bed ; nevertheless she quickly decided to occupy that herself ; even to her sense of fitness she could not make so great a personal sacrifice. The room surpassed her splendid conceptions of baronial grandeur ; it atoned for the absence of the crimson carpet on the staircase ; in spite of the agitation of her entrance, she had noticed that the halls and the stairs were of polished hard wood.

Lady Downes had urged, Mrs. Wayne to rest from the fatigue of her journey before dinner, and she sent up some tea and toast. But Mrs. Wayne was too nervous to rest ; she occupied herself in unpacking her wardrobe and hanging her new dresses so that they should not be crushed. Dorothea would have liked to go out and walk about the place ; she was afraid, however, that Lady Downes or Sir Hubert would see her and feel obliged to entertain her. She disliked being "entertained." For this reason visiting had always been dis-



agreeable to her, except at a few places where she was allowed to do as she pleased. When it was time for dinner Mrs. Wayne was pale with excitement, and so nervous that she had to cling to her daughter's arm for support. Mrs. Ladd, who brought up behind her, gave her courage, however, so that when they entered the long drawing room, she felt able to play her part. A glance at Dorothea, moreover, lent her additional support; in her dinner dress of white corded silk, Dorothea had never looked finer, and her repose, the widow said to herself, had never been more regal. It was more than maternal solicitude that kept Mrs. Wayne's eyes fixed upon her. Her imagination was inspired, intoxicated. If Annetta Griffin could only see her child at that moment! Mrs. Wayne's sharp eyes saw also that Sir Hubert and Harrington Boyd were impressed by the vision. How strange that these two men should be admiring her daughter at the same moment, in the same place! For the moment her heart fairly warmed toward Harrington Boyd. She felt sure that Dorothea cared nothing for him, and this saved her from fearing him; besides, his interest in her daughter might prove of service during the next few

days. Mrs. Wayne had not read romances all her life for nothing.

The dining room was hung with family portraits and with battle flags and trophies. Sir Hubert sat beside Dorothea and told her stories of various members of his family that the portraits represented and the history of the most interesting of the trophies. The men had nearly all been fighters; he and his father were almost the only peaceful ones. Most of his anecdotes were related humorously, as if he were afraid of seeming to boast. As Dorothea listened to him her eyes wandered over the great room, over the heavy carvings on the walls, over the balcony that looked down on the scene, through the windows that let in the red rays of the setting sun, and gave her a view of the smooth green lawn and the waving trees beyond.

This was what English country life really meant, she said to herself. How beautiful it was! It surpassed all the descriptions that she had ever read of it. She did not wish to speak; she was content to sit still, enjoying her impressions and listening to Sir Hubert's pleasant English voice. Most of the conversation was sustained by Mrs. Follett Ladd and Lady Bloomsbury; they seemed, indeed, to be trying to out-

do each other; that is, during the first of the meal, for after a time Lady Bloomsbury gave up the contest, and went on talking inaudibly to Harrington Boyd. Presently Mrs. Ladd appeared to realize that her exuberance was out of harmony with the tranquillity of the hour, and the dinner came to a close in a low hum of voices that hardly broke the silence. The servants noiselessly brought in the candles, and the guests lingered for a few moments in the dim light. Coffee was served on the lawn; as the darkness deepened and the moon rose, they strolled away, Dorothea with Sir Hubert, Lady Bloomsbury with Harrington Boyd, and the other ladies together, with Follett Ladd beside them, smoking his cigar.

When Dorothea returned that night to Queen Elizabeth's bedchamber she felt as if she had passed an almost perfect evening; she had allowed herself to forget her cares and to enjoy the charm of the place and the time. Her mother, however, expressed disappointment that Lady Downes' other guests consisted of the Ladds and Lady Bloomsbury and Harrington Boyd only. She had hoped to make fresh connections, to establish more intricate relations with the British aristocracy.

After the first day at Broadoaks Dorothea found that she could do as she pleased there. Her mother devoted herself to Mrs. Ladd, and Mrs. Ladd's husband was rarely seen about the place except at luncheon and dinner and during the evening; at these times he had very little to say. He seemed to exist chiefly for the purpose of smoking cigars; save at table, he was rarely seen without a big cigar in his mouth.

At Broadoaks Mrs. Wayne fell at once into luxurious habits; she took breakfast in bed at half past eight, then slept again till eleven. Her afternoons were devoted to communion with Lady Downes and Mrs. Follett Ladd. Indeed, from luncheon till bedtime one of these ladies was rarely seen unaccompanied by the other two. Whenever Dorothea caught a glimpse of them crossing the lawn or taking tea on the veranda of the summerhouse, where she joined them at four o'clock, they were indulging in the passionate conversation of people who meet at a railway station after years of separation and before the train arrives that is to tear them apart endeavour to talk out their confidences. She marvelled at the inexhaustible fertility of their topics. At night, while preparing for bed, bits from these conferences used to be flung to

her from the adjoining room ; occasionally, her mother would desert Queen Elizabeth's chamber to give a dramatic repetition of some particularly vital passage. Mrs. Wayne was rapidly becoming an authority on the scandals of the British aristocracy ; Dorothea was at first surprised that Lady Downes should care to spend her time in retailing gossip, but she soon discovered that most of this came from Mrs. Ladd, who knew far more than her hostess about Burke's Peerage. Dorothea would have been bored by these tales if she hadn't observed that her mother fairly bloomed under them ; never since her husband's death had the widow seemed so strong and happy ; at dinner her complexion used to soften and reveal suggestions of autumnal beauty.

Dorothea was herself happier than she had been since reaching England ; her enjoyment may have been the greater because she had not expected to enjoy the visit at Broadoaks. Her mother had ceased to criticise her ; indeed, she was given so much independence that she sometimes wondered at it ; it seemed like the result of a plan. The first morning after her arrival she was awakened at six o'clock by the flaming of the sun. She rose quickly and hurried



into the next room to draw the curtains there so that her mother might not be awakened too. For a moment she was frightened ; in the fierce glare the red hangings made the place look as if it were on fire. Her mother was sleeping quietly, strands of her thin gray hair hanging over her forehead, with one arm stretched on the coverlet. When Dorothea lay down again she was unable to sleep. So she decided to go out for a walk before breakfast.

The air was crisp and cool and the grass sparkled in the sun. The country looked as fresh as if it were spring. The foliage of the trees was of a vivid green ; in America the trees were just beginning to become dry and sere and the first leaves were falling. She followed the path that led to the lake for fear of losing her way if she chose another. No one was in sight ; and the great house had the air of being asleep.

When she had gone halfway toward the lake she noticed a wide path running across the hill to the east. She decided to change her course and explore ; even if she lost her way it would merely make her late for breakfast. For several moments she walked under the trees, and then suddenly came upon an open space



within sight of a group of low buildings which she supposed to be the stables. Her supposition was confirmed when a man came from behind one of the buildings leading a horse by a rope. He was presently followed by another figure, which she recognised as Sir Hubert Downes. For a moment she thought of turning back into the path to keep out of sight. Then she decided that this would be foolish; so she walked on toward the buildings. Sir Hubert did not see her till she had gone halfway toward him. Then he looked surprised and he hurried to meet her. He was in a riding suit, with high boots splashed with mud, and his cheeks were even ruddier than they usually seemed.

"Aren't you up very early?" he said with a smile, as he offered her his hand. "Are all Americans as energetic as you are?"

"I'm not usually so energetic myself," Dorothea explained. "The sun woke me. But I like the country in the morning."

"Do you ride?" he asked quickly.

"I used to when my father was alive. But I haven't ridden since."

"Oh!" Sir Hubert looked sympathetic, but he couldn't think of anything appropriate to say.

"Wouldn't you like to try it again?" he asked after a moment.

Her eyes brightened. "I should like it very much, but I haven't my habit here."

"I think we can get one for you. We'll try a horse to-morrow morning if you like. There's a pretty country between here and Hillsborough."

They were walking round the stables, and when they reached one of the buildings Sir Hubert pushed the door open and led the way in.

"I'll show you the mare that I think would suit you," he said. "She's very gentle, but she has some spirit, too. You'll like her."

The horses standing quietly in the stalls looked very contented and sleek. Sir Hubert went up to one of them, a large sorrel, and patted her on the face and mane.

"Come in, Miss Wayne," he said. "Nellie won't hurt you. She's the most affectionate creature in the world. Whoa, Nellie! Look out for your skirts, Miss Wayne."

Dorothea slid into the stall beside the horses and Nellie's great purple eyes turned to her inquiringly. The examination seemed to be satisfactory, for the horse thrust her head

forward till it almost touched her visitor's face.

"I knew Nellie would like you," Sir Hubert laughed. "That's a great compliment, too. Sometimes she turns her head away when she has callers, and refuses to pay any attention to them."

Nellie kept trying to rub her mouth against Dorothea's face. Sir Hubert seemed to be greatly amused.

"She's trying to kiss you. Don't be afraid. She often kisses me. It's a little trick I taught her when she was a colt. Here, Nellie, give me a kiss, won't you? I haven't had a kiss from you since yesterday morning."

Nellie, however, refused to turn. She had thrust out her tongue and was trying to lick Dorothea's cheek.

"She's never treated me like that," Sir Hubert went on. "You've made a conquest, Miss Wayne."

Sir Hubert patted Nellie affectionately and drew out of the stall. Dorothea turned from the horse's caresses and followed, saying she was sorry she hadn't brought some lumps of sugar with her. Then she looked at the other horses, one of whom Sir Hubert called Flash,

and described as the only racer in the stables.

"If I were very rich," he said, "I'm afraid I should ruin myself with racing. That's a little weakness in our family. My grandfather made a fortune by it, but he lost it all before he had a chance to spend any of it on the estate."

They passed into the other stables, several of which presented rows of empty stalls, and were described by Sir Hubert as mementoes of the family's palmy days. Most of the other horses that Dorothea saw were heavy animals, used on the estate for farm work. Dorothea was impressed by the perfect orderliness that she saw everywhere. Sir Hubert, she thought, must be an excellent manager. When she spoke of the difficulty of taking care of such a large place, he laughed and said it was easy enough when one had nothing else to do. It was a terrible expense—too much for people of their limited means. But for his mother he would have sold it long before. She had a great pride in it, though, and she couldn't be happy anywhere else.

When they went back to the house they found Harrington Boyd walking in the garden. He seemed surprised to see them together.

"I thought I was the only early bird," he smiled, "besides Sir Hubert. I believe *he* never goes to bed. He sits up all night to get a reputation for being an early riser."

"You'd better come in and take some breakfast with us," said Sir Hubert amiably. "Miss Wayne is going to take it with my mother and myself."

"Thanks, very much; but I've breakfasted already in my room."

"Aren't you equal to two? I am always."

"But I don't go tearing about the country beforehand, as you do. I have to preserve my energy. I've got three hours of work ahead of me before luncheon."

The next day Dorothea had her first ride; it exhilarated her and gave her an appetite only a little less great than Sir Hubert's. She found herself opposite Lady Downes at the little table in the breakfast room, where the sun was flaming in through the open windows. Lady Downes seemed at her best in the early morning.

"I always wake up cheerful, and I'm never so glad to be alive as I am then," she said, reminding Dorothea of Lady Bloomsbury's speech



on the same subject. "It's a sign of good health, Dr. March says."

Dorothea sometimes wondered at her unflagging cheerfulness; nearly all the American women that she knew had the blues occasionally. Lady Downes, in spite of her sixty-five years, never seemed even fatigued.

"When I was your age, my dear," she said to Dorothea one day, "I used to think nothing of walking twenty miles across the country. Once I walked fifteen miles to a ball and then back again. There was a disease among the horses; so we couldn't drive. And the next day I got up as usual at half past six and had breakfast with my father. I was a Brackenbury, and the Brackenburys are famous for their health." Then she added proudly, "Hubert is like them."

Lady Downes loved to talk about her son, and when Dorothea was alone with her she sang his praises. One of her chief pleasures lay in recounting in detail the plots that scheming dowagers had made to entrap him for their daughters. From all of these he had extricated himself with wonderful skill, without giving offence to any one. Lady Downes believed that Hubert didn't have an enemy in the world;



among the people of the village he was regarded as a hero; they often asked him to settle their disputes, instead of going to law about them, and they accepted his decision without the least objection; they knew how honest he was.

After breakfast Dorothea devoted herself till luncheon to sketching; she soon became acquainted with the most picturesque spots on the place, and these gave her plenty of material. Occasionally she met Sir Hubert in her wanderings; but he usually passed her with a bow and a smile; he always seemed busy at these times, though just what he did she was unable to make out. She took one long walk with Lady Bloomsbury, who displayed a great liking for her and confided to her many of her secrets. With Dorothea Lady Bloomsbury put off her affectations; yet her views seemed curiously inconsistent and eccentric, as if they had been warped by the life she had led since her marriage. At the age of eighteen she had fallen in love with the man who, in spite of the opposition of the family, afterward became her husband; even then his vices were known, but she had refused to believe the stories current about him. Her account of the seven years

she had lived with him shocked Dorothea; Lady Bloomsbury seemed to take pleasure in dwelling on the most painful details. As a member of the Church of England, she had very strict ideas about divorce and she had refused to seek even a judicial separation. Sometimes she amused Dorothea by giving her advice about marriage.

"No woman should marry till she's thirty-five," she said one day. "Until then she's incapable of forming a rational opinion about men. Besides, if she does wait till she's thirty-five she'll probably see the wisdom of not marrying at all; so she escapes the risk of knowing the greatest misery that any woman can know. Above all things, my dear, never marry an Englishman; Englishmen don't know how to treat women. I've heard that Americans make the best husbands, but I haven't known enough of them to be able to judge for myself. Anyway, they can't be *worse* than Englishmen. The only Englishman I've ever known who I thought could make a woman really happy is Sir Hubert Downes, and in my opinion he'll never marry any one. His mother has made him what he is, and she'll keep him as he is; he's so wrapped up in her that he'll never see

any one to compare with her. After all, it's the women that make men what they are. We spoil them, and then they turn on us and rend us, as some one has said about some animals."

At times Dorothea was unable to follow the convolutions of Lady Bloombury's thought; it seemed to run from one topic to another with an untiring swiftness. Lady Bloomsbury's quick deductions were often quite unwarranted; like many clever women, always seeking for motives, she drew conclusions from insufficient facts, she was too quick to form an opinion.

When confronted with a question on vital topics Dorothea was often obliged to say that she didn't know, she hadn't thought enough about the subject, or she hadn't had experience enough to judge. At first she feared that Lady Bloomsbury would think, because of this lack of readiness, that she was stupid; but she soon discerned that it made no difference; even if she had disagreed with her, the countess would not have changed her mind on any point.

Of Harrington Boyd, Dorothea saw very much more than she had hoped during her stay at Broadoaks. He had a habit for happening around after her ride in the morn-

ing with Sir Hubert, and in the evenings he persistently devoted himself to her. When he was not with her, however, he spent much of his time with Lady Bloomsbury. There was a suggestion of *camaraderie* between them that surprised Dorothea; she suspected, too, that Boyd was making a study of Lady Bloomsbury, prying into her secrets as he had done with the original of *Mabel Granger*. Once she had a fancy that he was trying to flirt with Lady Bloomsbury in her presence, possibly for the purpose of making her jealous; but this fancy she dismissed as absurd; she despised him, but she believed he had too much intelligence to do that. After the fourth day, as she reviewed her visit, she felt glad that she had come to Broadoaks, and she was sorry to leave the next afternoon.

## XVI.

AT the very moment when Dorothea was thinking of her departure from Broadoaks her mother was in conference with Lady Downes and Mrs. Ladd. The subject under discussion was the prolongation of Mrs. Wayne's visit for at least three or four days. For the sake of appearances Mrs. Wayne thought it best to be coy. She would have liked to remain with Lady Downes all summer, but it was only with apparent difficulty that she was finally persuaded to linger till the end of the week. The Ladds had decided to stay a few days longer.

When Mrs. Wayne spoke to Dorothea about the change of plan she was surprised to encounter no objection. Mrs. Wayne had decided to pass most of the month of August in Scotland, that is, she had suggested the plan to her daughter; secretly, she relied on a certain dramatic event to shape her move-



ments quite differently. During her talks with Mrs. Ladd at Broadoaks she had had the most intense spiritual experiences of her life ; there were moments when she felt exalted, when she seemed hardly to touch the earth. Oswego, New York, the Misses Marbury, even Annetta Griffin, were as remote from her as if they lived in another sphere. Sometimes in the morning, when she sat alone in Queen Elizabeth's room, the red-silk hangings ablaze in the sunshine, she became almost frightened ; she was like one who trembled from too much happiness, from a consciousness of the grim humour of fate.

The next morning Dorothea rose at half past six to take her ride with Sir Hubert. She found him waiting in the lower hall ; the horses were standing at the door.

With Nellie Dorothea had established the most friendly relations ; every morning the horse kissed her and lapped her face and munched the bits of sugar that she gave her.

To-day, instead of riding Flash, Sir Hubert rode Roderick, a new horse that he had bought only a few weeks before. At first Roderick seemed restless, but after they passed out of the park, into the broad road, he settled to a steady



trot, and Nellie followed. The morning was cool and clear and the slanting rays of the sun shot through the trees. Dorothea's face glowed as she rose and sank in the saddle. For several moments Sir Hubert didn't speak, then he called out :

"I'm glad this isn't going to be our last ride."

"So am I," Dorothea responded.

"I wish you could be here for the hunting season. You'd like that."

"I'm afraid we shall be in America then."

Roderick spurted and bore his rider several yards away from Nellie. Sir Hubert reined him in, however, and allowed Dorothea to overtake him.

"When do you go back?" he asked, when she was at his side again and they were riding together.

"Early next month, I think. Mother will be anxious to see her old friends again by that time."

"But you would like to stay longer?"

"Yes, I like England very much."

Their horses had lapsed into a walk, and for a moment they went on side by side. Then Sir Hubert started Roderick into a trot again, Nellie clattering behind him.

"You'd make a famous mount. You and Nellie would beat the field," he laughed. "You must be a born rider. You're in sympathy with your horse. That's a great point."

Nellie was going too fast to allow Dorothea to acknowledge the compliment. For the next half hour they spoke only at intervals, and gave themselves up to the exhilaration of riding. Suddenly, Dorothea saw a bicyclist coming rapidly toward her. Before she had time to slacken speed, she passed Roderick and flew up the road toward the turning that led to Renwick. Dorothea did not understand the cause of this sudden increase of speed. She tried to rein Nellie in, but the effort had the effect of making her go faster. Then she decided to let the rein hang loose and the horse tire herself out. She didn't feel nervous; she supposed Nellie had been frightened by something on the road, and would grow quiet again in a few moments. She did not dare turn into the Renwick road for fear of being thrown.

So Nellie, rapidly gaining speed, shot straight ahead, apparently determined to escape from some unknown terror. Dorothea could hear the clattering of Roderick's hoofs behind her; Sir Hubert had evidently started

in pursuit. If he had been riding Flash he might easily have overtaken her; but for some moments he was unable to lessen the distance between the two horses.

Dorothea was now thoroughly frightened; she said to herself that if Nellie didn't subside in a few minutes she should fall from the saddle from sheer terror. Even now she sat mechanically in her seat; a sudden change of the horse's motion would surely throw her. The steady beat of the hoofs on the hard road seemed to be pounding itself on her brain.

For several moments she felt as if she were clinging to life by the merest thread of consciousness. Then she heard Roderick approaching; she wondered what would happen if he came up to her. Surely Sir Hubert would not attempt to stop him; if he seized Nellie's bridle she would herself be thrown forward and trampled. She knew that he was only a hand's length behind her, but she could not put her fears into speech. The two animals were neck and neck now. She could not see Sir Hubert's face, but she fancied that she saw it, white and rigid. He stretched out his hand and grasped Nellie's bridle near the bit. For several moments the two horses ran to-

gether. Dorothea knew that she could not keep her seat much longer, but when Sir Hubert cried, "Hold on, Miss Wayne! She'll calm down in a minute," she determined not to yield to her weakness.

Sir Hubert's promise was not literally kept, for at least three minutes passed before he brought Nellie to a standstill. Then he jumped from Roderick, who was wet with foam, and, still clinging to Nellie's bridle, he gave one hand to Dorothea and helped her from her seat. She came near sinking to the ground, but with an effort she staggered to the fence on one side of the road, and hung over it, trying to catch her breath.

For several minutes she stood there without speaking, shaking her head whenever Sir Hubert made a suggestion for her comfort. Then she brushed her hair back from her forehead and turned her white face toward him with a faint smile.

"I think I'm all right now," she said.

"By Jove, you've got grit!" he exclaimed, looking down at her admiringly. Then he began to apologize for the behaviour of the horse. "It was that bicyclist that we passed near the Renwick road. Nellie isn't used to the bicycle

yet, and it always frightens her." He bent over and looked curiously at one of Nellie's feet.

"Then that was why she ran away," said Dorothea, seeking an explanation for Nellie's misbehaviour that would soothe her injured pride as a rider.

"Yes, that *must* have been it." Then he added, looking around vaguely on the open country. "She's dropped one of her shoes. I don't know how we're going to get home."

He turned to Dorothea again. Their eyes met and they both laughed.

"We're in a fix, as you Americans say."

"If I weren't so weak I shouldn't mind walking back," said Dorothea.

"But what should we do with the horses?"

"If Nellie were shod I could ride her back. Couldn't we take her to Renwick and have her shod?"

"You wouldn't be afraid to ride her again!" Sir Hubert cried in surprise. "You certainly *have* grit."

For several moments they discussed the situation, and finally decided to go to Poppleton, the nearest village, about a mile away, where Nellie could be shod. Sir Hubert insisted upon placing Dorothea's saddle on

Roderick, and as she rode he walked by her side, leading Nellie. He wanted to ride Nellie, but he yielded to Dorothea's objections. Dorothea was surprised not to feel the effects of her fright more than she did. She was still nervous and pale; but she felt curiously happy, perhaps at the thought of having had such an unexpected escape from serious injury and possible death. She rode slowly, so that Sir Hubert might keep pace with her; Roderick, moreover, seemed to be exhausted from his hard run, and Nellie's listless gait and the shamefaced way in which she hung her head showed she had lost her spirit.

When they reached the village they found a blacksmith at his forge. It would take at least half an hour to shoe Nellie, he said. Dorothea resigned herself to wait, and Sir Hubert looked impatient.

"Aren't you hungry?" he asked, smiling down at her.

She shook her head. "But you must be."

"I am," he acknowledged. "While we're waiting we might go up to the hotel and take breakfast. Then we can have another one when we go back."

She smiled her consent, and rose from the



wooden chair that the blacksmith had placed for her beside the open doors of his shop. They walked up the winding road leading to the centre of the village, past low brick houses like those she had seen during the drive from Penley to Broadoaks. It was barely half past seven, and they met groups of labourers on their way to work; the houses had the air of just waking up; most of the front windows were open and muslin curtains swayed in the breeze. The little front gardens were filled with flowers, giving the soft morning air a faint fragrance.

Dorothea observed these details half unconsciously; afterward they came back to her with surprising distinctness. Sir Hubert hardly spoke; they walked together like two people who knew each other well enough to dispense with speech when they had nothing in particular to say.

At the hotel, in spite of Dorothea's protests, Sir Hubert ordered what he called an "American breakfast," and she felt obliged to eat. There was something in his manner toward her that she had not noticed before, an odd combination of deference and tenderness which amused and touched her. Though she now felt no bad effects from her fright, he acted as if she were

still to be treated as a sufferer. When they returned to the blacksmith's they had a contest as to who should ride Nellie home. Dorothea won, and when she sat in the saddle again and patted Nellie's head she laughed into his face. She nodded to the blacksmith, and, as Sir Hubert mounted, she clattered down the road. In his grimy leather apron the blacksmith watched them till they had turned the corner that took them from his sight.

## XVII.

WHEN they reached Broadoaks they found Lady Downes and Mrs. Ladd in a state of nervous apprehension. A tradesman of the village, coming down the hill from Renwick, had seen Sir Hubert in pursuit of Dorothea's horse and informed the servants at Broadoaks of the runaway. In a moment both horses had disappeared, and he could not tell whether they had taken the road toward Renwick or Penley Manor.

The servant repeated the news to Lady Downes, who at once sent Harrington Boyd in a carriage to Renwick in search of Dorothea; she had heard her son say the night before that he intended to go to Renwick in the morning.

Mrs. Ladd, excitable when there was no cause for excitement, and cool in an emergency, was at once consulted. She quickly decided that the tradesman might have made a mistake; he had seen the horses in full gallop and had

rashly concluded that one of them was running away ; in any event, Mrs. Wayne must not be informed of the news.

Dorothea was amused to hear that he had not yet returned from his quest of her. When she had given an account of her adventure, Lady Downes was moved to tears, though Dorothea had tried to be as matter of fact as possible. She urged Dorothea to go to her room and lie down ; she must be suffering from the shock.

To please her, Dorothea did go to her room ; but she did not lie down. Though it was past nine o'clock her mother still slept ; so she tip-toed through the room. On her dressing table she found a letter in the handwriting of Aleck French, bearing the postmark "London." She tore it open and read the dozen lines that it contained. These announced his return from Paris the night before and ended with the request that he might come to see her. She could not understand why the letter vexed her. She did not realize that she was still suffering from the shock of the morning ; she merely knew that she felt nervous and irritable, and could not face her mother without betraying her feelings. So she put on her hat and went out of the room.

The house was quiet, and she met no one on the stairs or in the lower hall. She noticed a door that led into the garden. This she opened and walked along the path toward the woods. Only a few feeble-looking flowers were in the beds, cut into squares by low hedges of evergreens. In the centre of each stood a white marble figure of mythology, in nearly every instance with a piece chipped off the face and blackened and worn with age. When Dorothea reached the farther end of the garden she turned and looked back on the house. The cathedral-like windows were flashing in the sun, and the whole place seemed to glow. No one was in sight.

The path led down a steep incline, and then wound along the slope of the hill. Dorothea followed it to the lake at the end, directly opposite the summerhouse. She walked along the edge, and as she approached the bank a man's figure came from behind the studio. When he lifted his tennis cap and smiled Dorothea saw that he was Harrington Boyd.

"I've been waiting for you," he said, as they approached within speaking distance.

"Have you really?" she replied, with a touch of the superciliousness that she practised

on no one but him. "How did you know I was coming?"

"I knew you came down here to sketch every morning. I suppose you're taking advantage of this lovely country."

Dorothea looked vaguely around. "It is a lovely country," she said.

"Won't you sit down on the veranda for a moment? We can have a quiet talk then. I was glad to hear you had come out of your little accident so well," he said, with a smile that made her feel uncomfortable. "I suppose they told you I'd been in pursuit of you."

She thanked him for the trouble he had taken in her behalf. Then she sat on the seat that he offered her, and looked across the lake to the west. The air seemed to sparkle in the sunlight.

"*This* is England," said Harrington Boyd, making a sweeping gesture with his hand.

She nodded.

"This is England at its best. On a day like this it's the finest country in the world. But I never could understand why it is called 'Merrie England.' Externally, at any rate, England is the saddest country in the world. But after all, there's nothing like that," he went on, pointing



toward Broakoaks. "There's poetry there—there's history, art, romance, civilization, everything that lifts life from the dead level of the commonplace, and makes it really worth living."

She did not reply.

"We pretend we don't care for those things," he resumed, "but that's just because we don't have them, or rather because we can't have them. So we set up other things in their places and try to make ourselves think they are fine."

In spite of herself, Dorothea smiled.

"England is spoiling you," she said.

He looked at her thoughtfully for a moment. Then he said:

"I'm sure it won't spoil *you*."

She began to feel uneasy, and was about to suggest that she must resume her work. Then she thought she heard a noise in the studio above. She wondered if any one could be there. She herself had a key to the door, but she rarely took the trouble to lock it. The studio seemed to be free to any one who chose to enter. She looked up toward the open window, but seeing no one, she decided that she had been mistaken.

"How curious it is that we should be sitting

here in this place!" Boyd resumed. "Let me see. It's just about a year since I met you."

"A year next August," Dorothea replied briskly, as if referring to a matter of business.

He looked out at the lake, but his eyes seemed to see nothing.

"How many things have happened since then!" he said, apparently soliloquizing.

"To you? Have they?"

"Do you know," he went on, ignoring her question, "my meeting you last year was one of the best things that ever happened to me. You taught me a great many things."

"Did I really?"

Dorothea's face turned scarlet, and he seemed to take pleasure in the confusion he was causing her.

"Yes, you taught me a great deal about women and a great deal about myself. Before I met you I didn't know myself. Now, thanks to you," he added with a laugh, "I've made a very interesting acquaintance."

He glanced at her again to see what effect his words were having. Her face was impassive.

"I suppose you remember that I told you I was in love with you," he resumed. "Or per-

haps you've forgotten it. I dare say a good many men have told you that. So, perhaps you won't mind if I tell you now that I was quite mistaken."

"No; I don't mind," Dorothea replied. "I am not at all surprised."

"You interested me more than any one I had ever known. That was why I thought I was in love with you. I must confess that you interest me still—yes, you interest me very much. At this moment, you are even more interesting to me than you were last year. There are more complications now, you see. You don't mind my being so frank with you, do you? If you weren't so intelligent I shouldn't be so frank. But we are both intelligent. So why shouldn't we speak out?"

He smiled down into her face, but she did not look at him, and her own face did not change expression. "I think I have always been frank with you," she said quietly.

"You have been more than frank. You have been as outspoken as—well, as any woman can be with a man. I suppose you wonder why I say this to you. I say it so that we may be friends again. Since we've been at Broadoaks you haven't treated me quite as if we were

friends. Can't we *be* friends?" he concluded, holding out his hand.

She ignored the hand.

"Of course we can be friends," she laughed. "There's no reason in the world why we shouldn't be."

He did not offer his hand a second time. When he spoke again she thought she detected a suggestion of irritation in his tone.

"You are really a remarkable person. After going through what you went through this morning nine women out of ten would take to their beds for weeks. But you look as if nothing had happened, as if you rather enjoyed the experience of risking your life."

Dorothea could not have told why this speech vexed her. Afterward, when she thought it over, she saw that she had a vague consciousness of the insinuation it contained. Harrington Boyd kept his eyes upon her, but she was looking straight ahead. He still smiled, but the smile was not particularly joyous.

"It was really providential," he went on, "your horse's running away."

"Providential?"

"Yes, opportune. It was just the kind of adventure that would please Mrs. Ladd. It's

given a delicious touch of romance to your visit."

Dorothea turned and looked at him coldly.

"I don't understand you."

He burst out laughing, and returned her look without flinching; but she thought she detected a faint flush around his eyes.

"I assure you I don't mean to be enigmatical," he said. "It's been plain enough to me all along. Don't you suppose I know why Mrs. Ladd secured the invitation for you and your mother to come up here? She wanted to bag Sir Hubert for you. Surely it can't be that you haven't seen that—any one as keen as you are! Your mother and Mrs. Ladd had it all planned out before you came, and even Lady Downes is in the conspiracy. So you'll understand what I mean by saying the runaway horse was opportune. It was a very pretty incident, and it will help matters along. Those things are often revelations to men; it opens their eyes. I haven't a doubt Sir Hubert——"

Dorothea had been breathing hard and looking at him with whitening lips, as if fascinated by what he was saying. Suddenly, she rose from her seat. "I won't listen to

another word. How dare you insult me like this? I thought you had at least the *manners* of a gentleman, but now I see you would stoop to anything, even to insulting a woman, to gratify your petty spite."

She turned to gather her wraps, which had fallen on the chair.

"I think I understand what you mean," he said, with a smile. "You imagine that I'm jealous of Sir Hubert. You're quite mistaken there. On the contrary, I've done all I could to help on the little conspiracy. I've really been magnanimous, and this is the way you show your appreciation. But I never expect gratitude from a woman in these matters."

She had taken her wraps in her hand, and was walking past him as if she neither heard nor saw him. Her face, which had turned pale, was flushed now, and her eyes were dark with anger.

As she approached the house her anger subsided and she felt so weak and ill that she feared she should become faint before reaching her room. She felt that she had just had an illumination! For the moment her resentment against Harrington Boyd was lost in her self-accusation! All he had said was true, she



kept crying to herself. She had been a fool not to know it before! But she had really known it, and she had chosen to ignore the truth, to allow herself to be caught in the toils of her mother's scheming with that woman from New York. Oh, she was justly punished! Of course, every one in the house understood why she had come there and must despise her as a vulgar adventuress. At this moment they were probably laughing, as Harrington Boyd had done, over the runaway of the morning, and saying that it was a clever trick. Her whole body tingled with shame at the thought. But she would take herself out of such an odious position. She would not stay another night under the roof of Sir Hubert Downes!

## XVIII.

ON reaching the house Dorothea hurried up the stairs. She was startled to find her mother still in bed ; it seemed to her that since the early hours of the morning she had herself passed through the experiences of years ; during this time her mother had been sleeping. Mrs. Wayne saw that something dramatic had either happened or was going to happen. For a moment a consciousness of her mother's thoughts restrained Dorothea ; then as she unpinned her hat before the looking-glass, which reflected her white face, she burst out.

“We can't stay here any longer, mother. We must leave to-day as we intended.”

“Leave to-day ?” Mrs. Wayne sat up, and her nightdress assumed a pinkish hue from the sun and the red hangings. “What are you talking about ?”

“I mean that we must go away from here. I can't stay a day longer. I *won't*

stay. If you won't come with me I shall go alone."

Dorothea kept her back turned to the bed so that her mother should not scrutinize her face.

"You must be crazy. When we told them yesterday——"

"No matter what we told them!" Dorothea cried, almost hysterically. "Nothing in the world will make me stay here another day. I've had enough of it. I can't bear it any longer. I must have my way about this. I've yielded to you in everything since we came over here. I've done things that I didn't want to do. I've humiliated myself, I've put up with impudence and insults. Now I won't endure it any longer. I'm going this afternoon. I won't——"

Her voice broke and she hurried into her own room and closed the door.

Mrs. Wayne leaned on her elbow and stared at the door, as if trying to read there some explanation of her daughter's conduct. Then she began to weep softly into one hand. Suddenly, as if on impulse, she dried her tears, rose from the bed, and dressed herself quickly. Opening the door leading into the hall, she peered up

and down, and then slipped over to Mrs. Ladd's room at one end of the corridor.

There was no response to her knock, and she turned away with a look of bitter disappointment. For a moment, she hesitated at her daughter's door, then entered without knocking. A trunk stood in the middle of the room. Dorothea was packing her dresses.

"Perhaps you'll give me an explanation now of this freak of yours," said Mrs. Wayne, with exaggerated dignity.

"I've already given you an explanation, mother," Dorothea replied, busily continuing packing. "I can't stay here any longer."

"That's no explanation at all. What am I to say to Lady Downes? What am I to——"

"You can tell her that I don't feel well, if you like. Nellie ran away with me this morning, and she'll think it's that."

"Nellie ran away with you! Is that the——"

"No, it isn't the reason. I was frightened a little, but that's all. I'm all right again now. But I can't stay and I won't stay. If you are coming with me I'll pack your things for you."

Mrs. Wayne went into her own room with-

out replying. She felt as if she had an illumination. After the runaway, Sir Hubert, in the agitation of the moment, had proposed to Dorothea and Dorothea had refused him. She had an anguished desire to share this revelation with Mrs. Follett Ladd, and she paced up and down the room listening intently for Mrs. Ladd's footsteps in the hall. If the Misses Marbury were only with her! They would throw on this complication the fine light of their intelligence. Even Annetta Griffin would be sympathetic, in spite of her persistent fondness for taking Dorothea's part. When, finally, Mrs. Ladd's brisk step echoed along the corridor, Mrs. Wayne opened the door, and intercepted her. Mrs. Ladd would have entered Queen Elizabeth's chamber if her friend hadn't made a sign that the conference must be elsewhere.

For an hour the two ladies were closeted in Mrs. Ladd's room. When Mrs. Wayne emerged, her face wore a look of chastened suffering, exalted by hope. The social leader had manifested no surprise on hearing that Dorothea was bent on leaving Broadoaks at once, but she had not offered an explanation of the girl's conduct. She did suggest, however, that



Sir Hubert would probably pursue Dorothea to London, and this lent Mrs. Wayne a moral support that enabled her to endure the sacrifice of cutting short her visit. She agreed that it was well for the girl to be coy, and Mrs. Ladd's reasoning made her secretly proud of her daughter.

On returning to her room she found Dorothea collecting her things for their departure. She made no remonstrance and she sat on the bed.

"Has Sir Hubert been proposing to you?" she said.

Dorothea's face turned scarlet.

"Proposing to me?" she repeated, unconsciously imitating her mother's method of parrying an attack.

"Yes—*proposing* to you," Mrs. Wayne insisted irritably. "Don't you suppose I know that he's in love with you? Any one could see that from the way he looks at you, and from the way he's acted ever since you've been here."

"You are quite mistaken, mother. He's not in love with me and I'm not in love with him. And as for his proposing to me, that is absurd."



Mrs. Wayne's spirits came very near sinking again, but the thought of Mrs. Ladd's logic buoyed them up; Dorothea's remarks were merely another instance of her maidenly modesty. It was quite possible that Sir Hubert had not proposed in words; indeed, now that she had time to think the matter over, she felt sure that there had been no formal declaration; he had probably given her a sudden caress which she had resented; at this moment, her daughter must be experiencing the conflicting emotions of fear and joy, of exaltation and despair that accompany the awakening of love. The situation was romantic, intense, dramatic. Mrs. Wayne would have given a year of her life for the privilege of talking it over with Annetta Griffin. How many times Annetta Griffin had told her that Dorothea had a great capacity for affection!

"Of course," she said, "you can't go down to luncheon. I've asked Mrs. Ladd to say you're ill. It's the only thing to be done under the circumstances."

Dorothea had not realized that her mother would take her literally, and oblige her to pose as an invalid; she saw, however, that the merest courtesy made it necessary for her to offer some

plausible excuse to her hostess for her sudden departure. A few minutes later Lady Downes appeared at the door of Queen Elizabeth's chamber and Dorothea was obliged to steal into her own room. She could hear her mother explaining that Dorothea was feeling just a little better, but not well enough to leave her room for the present; she had been more shaken by the accident than she had at first imagined. How one lie entailed another! Dorothea thought. Before she could escape from Broadoaks she would be forced to say and act a dozen untruths. When luncheon was brought to her—the luncheon of an invalid, a thin broth, with toast and a bit of chicken—she could not help smiling at the humour of the situation. She ate it all at the risk of betraying the fraud, and she could have eaten as much again; but she didn't dare ask for more. Since her early breakfast at the inn she had acquired a large appetite.

At two o'clock she finished packing. The train left Penley for London at four, and the carriage would take them from Broadoaks a little before three. It suddenly occurred to her that she hadn't sent Wood word to prepare dinner; so she called one of the maids and sent him a telegram. A few minutes later she found her

hostess in the drawing room with her mother and Mrs. Ladd, and she received a commiserating greeting.

"I was afraid you'd feel the effects of it, dear. One always does after the first excitement is over. Do sit down here. How pale you are! You must have had a very great shock."

Lady Downes went on to explain that she wouldn't urge Miss Wayne to change her mind about leaving Broadoaks; she had already urged her mother to no purpose. She had promised herself, however, the pleasure of having them with her again before they returned to America, perhaps when they came back to London from Scotland. Mrs. Wayne had told her all about the Scotland plans.

The three men presently entered the drawing room and added their sympathy and regrets at Dorothea's departure. Sir Hubert seemed to be greatly distressed by her illness.

Mrs. Ladd's eyes were fixed upon her, and once she fancied that she saw the social leader glance contemptuously at Harrington Boyd. Follett Ladd lapsed into a chair in the corner, and appeared to be even more sullen than usual. The conversation flagged; every one seemed

constrained, and Lady Downes, in spite of her *aplomb*, was flustered. There was a visible relief among the ladies when Sir Hubert asked Dorothea if she wouldn't go over to the stables and receive a formal apology from Nellie for her conduct of the morning. Dorothea flushed as she rose to accept the invitation, and Harrington Boyd smiled at Mrs. Ladd, who was staring serenely at Mrs. Wayne.

Sir Hubert did not speak until they had passed the rows of grinning statuary in the garden, and entered the path under the trees that led to the stables. Then he said, with the English upward inflection that she liked to hear:

"I'm uncommonly sorry you're leaving, Miss Wayne."

"Thank you. I'm sorry, too. I've enjoyed being here very much."

"But not so much as we've enjoyed having you—my mother and I. You've brightened us up immensely."

Dorothea could scarcely keep from smiling. In her state of mind at that moment the idea of her brightening any one up seemed absurd.

"I shall miss those morning rides," Sir Hubert went on awkwardly.

"But you'll take them just the same," she said, for lack of something better to say.

"Oh, yes. But it'll be different. I shall feel lonely," Sir Hubert laughed. "And I shall hate to think," he added, as an afterthought, "that on our last ride together you had such a beastly accident. But we did have a rather pleasant morning of it afterward, didn't we? Or, rather, I did. I sha'n't forget that breakfast at the inn. It——"

"There's one thing I must tell you before I go," Dorothea interrupted. "I am not—it isn't true that I'm ill from the accident—I just said that as an excuse. I am perfectly well; only I feel that I must go. That's why I——"

She stopped, her words becoming entangled in her confusion. Sir Hubert looked at her in surprise; he could not believe she had told a lie; he felt sure there must be a misunderstanding somewhere. While he was trying to discover it Dorothea regained her composure.

"I wanted to tell you so that you shouldn't blame yourself. The runaway was nothing. An hour afterward I felt as well as I'd been before it."

"But why are you going away then?" Sir Hubert insisted.



Dorothea was not prepared for this cross-questioning and she did not know what answer to make. For a moment she walked on without speaking. Then, "I am going because I must," she said. "I—I can't explain to you the reason."

He had fallen a step behind her so that she might have the whole of the narrow path.

"Has the reason anything to do with me? Have I—have I done anything to offend you?"

His first question had made Dorothea catch her breath; the second gave her so much relief, and at the same time seemed so odd to her, that she laughed out.

"Oh, no. I don't believe you could do anything to offend me," she replied without thinking.

They had come into the open again and he walked on by her side across the hill toward the stables.

"I thought, perhaps, this morning—perhaps you thought—I—I had taken a liberty—asking you to take breakfast at that inn. I shouldn't have done it, perhaps, if you'd been an English girl; but I knew that Americans were so much



more sensible about that. And then—it was such a pleasure to me to be there with you. I hope you didn't mind if I showed that too much; but I really felt so relieved when it turned out—when I knew you were safe, you know. Till that happened I didn't—I didn't realize how much I cared for you."

Dorothea's eyes were fixed on the grass; her face was burning. She was blaming herself for having come out with him, for not having avoided this scene; but his words gave her a strange sense of elation. She made an effort to keep back this feeling, however, and she waited almost breathlessly for him to speak again.

"I wanted to tell you that I loved you this morning," he went on. "I think I have loved you ever since that first night I met you at Mrs. Ladd's. And to-day when—this morning, it seemed to me that if any harm came to you it would be the worst thing that could happen to me. I wanted to tell you that then, but I was afraid that might be taking an unfair advantage of you. Perhaps I ought not to tell you now. I haven't any reason to think you could care for me. But before you go I want you to know about it, and ask you

to be my wife. Of course, I don't expect you to promise now. I'm willing to——"

Dorothea knew that he was going on with his talk to hide his embarrassment; but she could not find the right words with which to stop him. Now, however, she felt that she must speak.

"I can't promise," she cried quickly. "I am sorry—I'm sorry you've said this to me. I do respect you—I think you are—I *can't* promise——" she broke down helplessly. "Oh, if you knew all about me," she went on a moment later, "you wouldn't have any respect for me."

"I should consider myself very lucky if I could take you as you are," he said, with a faint smile. "Won't you leave it undecided for a while? I'm not conceited enough to think that I can make you care for me in the short time you've known me. Perhaps after you go back to America you'll let me come to see you there. I've wanted to go for a long time, you know. I don't want you to commit yourself to anything or to give me any encouragement——"

"I couldn't do that," Dorothea interrupted. "It would be doing you a great wrong. You

can come to America if you want to, of course; but you must never think there can be anything between us. That is impossible."

"Then you—you think you couldn't care for me?" he asked, with a touching simplicity.

"I never could marry you," Dorothea replied firmly, keeping her head away from him. "If you come to America, it would be better for us both not to see each other there."

She did not dare to glance at Sir Hubert's face. He made no reply, and they walked on in silence. They were within a few minutes' walk of the stables, but Dorothea suddenly decided that she must turn back. She could not bear the thought of going in there now. If she went to bid Nellie good-bye she knew that she would make herself ridiculous by bursting into tears. She would have liked to gather her skirts round her and run away from Sir Hubert; his presence tortured her.

"I'm afraid I don't feel equal to going on any farther," she said. "Perhaps we'd better turn back."

"If you are tired I'll drive you back," he said, with a quick look of alarm at her pale face.

"No, I'd rather walk," she replied nervously.

On the way to the house they scarcely spoke. Dorothea was reminded of her walk with Harrington Boyd on that last night at Hull, a year before. She had been mortified then; now she had a feeling of hopeless misery, of impotent rebellion against fate. It was bad enough that she should herself have to suffer—it was shameful that she should bring suffering on others. Yet at the moment all her pity was for herself. She longed to go away to some place where she could give herself up to her misery. This, however, was just what she couldn't do; she would have to wear her mask to the end of her visit. When she returned to the drawing room at Broadoaks she seemed as impassive as usual.

## XIX.

ON their way to London Dorothea and her mother had to endure the society of three elderly ladies and a fat man; so their conversation was restrained. It was after six o'clock when they reached the city. At the lodgings in Mandeville Place they found the curtains of the drawing room drawn, the room bright with lamps and lighted candles, the table shining with its damask cloth and glass. Wood displayed an obsequious pleasure at being able to serve them again, and his wife emerged from the kitchen to greet them. During the meal Mrs. Wayne had very little to say; from her manner, however, Dorothea saw that she was keeping something in reserve. For this she had prepared herself; she had decided to tell the whole truth at any cost; it would clear the ground, and enable her to begin a new chapter in her life. Moreover, she was disgusted with lying; during the day she had told lies enough to destroy any one's self-respect.



As soon as the table was cleared and Wood left the room Mrs. Wayne spoke up.

"Perhaps you'll tell me now what happened to-day," she said, with an unusual authority of tone.

"Do you mean why I wanted to leave Broadoaks?" Dorothea asked quietly.

"Yes; why you changed your mind all of a sudden. What made you do it?"

Dorothea repeated her conversation of the morning with Harrington Boyd. She expected her mother to be confounded by it; instead, however, the widow became enraged.

"Do you mean to say," she cried, "that you would *allow* yourself to care what that creature said? Why, he was jealous because Sir Hubert was paying you attention. Couldn't you see that? Couldn't you see that he said those things out of spite? I didn't believe you could be such a ninny. Everybody saw it—even Lady Downes!"

Dorothea was so unprepared for this attack that she could not formulate a reply. Besides, she was appalled by her mother's complete indifference to the charges Harrington Boyd had brought against her. She turned away, and would have ended the conversation if her mother hadn't broken out again.



"It will be a judgment on you if you lose him. I never saw any one so reckless as you are! Just for the sake of a little pique you are risking the chance of a lifetime."

"If you are referring to Sir Hubert, mother, you are quite mistaken. You might as well put out of your mind, once for all, any thought of my marrying him."

Her mother's eyes blazed.

"What do you mean by that?" she cried.

"I mean exactly what I say, mother."

Mrs. Wayne bent forward in her seat. "Do you mean to say," she said slowly, with a suggestion of horror in her tone—"do you mean to say you've *refused* him?"

"He asked me to be his wife this afternoon, and I told him that I couldn't marry him under any circumstances."

Mrs. Wayne jumped to her feet. Her face was pale, and her lips quivered.

"Oh, you fool, you fool!" she cried.

Dorothea wondered why she did not become angry. Her mother's reproaches failed to excite her in the least; she seemed to have lost spirit. She sat without speaking as the thin figure confronted her.

"How can you look me in the face? Do you

suppose I don't know why you've done this? I saw the letter you got from Aleck French this morning on your dressing table. So you had to come down here and meet him before his wife was cold in her coffin! To think that I should have brought up such a daughter!" she sobbed. "I thought I should have some comfort out of you in my old age. You'll break my heart! You've broken it already!"

She buried her face in her hands, and walked out of the room, sobbing convulsively. Dorothea heard her throw herself on her bed and give herself up to a fit of weeping. Dorothea herself felt numb; her body ached. These outbreaks of her mother's, though common enough in her life, always terrified her. For several moments she was unable to move; then she rose stiffly from her seat and closed the door that her mother had left open. The sobbing in the next room was subsiding; after it her mother would fall asleep.

For nearly half an hour Dorothea walked up and down the apartment, thinking of the hideous failure her European visit had been. She wondered if her whole life were going to be a tragedy. Then she tried to shake off such morbid thoughts. Her life, she told

herself, was quite as happy as most lives. She had had disappointments: so had every one; several of her friends had had greater disappointments. She loved life; she was interested in her work; she did not have the thousand and one worries of people of small means; she could enjoy many luxuries that most people were denied. No, on the whole she was happy, quite happy. Then she thought of Sir Hubert Downes, and she came very near softening. She tried to delude herself into thinking that her regret was wholly for him. She had been culpable in going there; she had never seriously encouraged him; yet she had done him a great wrong.

When her mother's sobs had ceased Dorothea sat at her desk. She wished that she were at home in Oswego; she felt as if she were the victim of a hideous conspiracy. Then she blamed herself for having allowed people to interfere with her, for not having asserted her rights. She had been weak, the most pitiable of cowards. For the first time in her life she longed for some one to confide in.

It was strange that at this moment she should have thought of Aleck French; he

was the last person in the world that she could tell of her experiences at Broadoaks. Yet she was more eager to see him now than she had ever been; with him she always felt at ease; he seemed to understand her, to know when to let her alone. She recalled long walks they had taken together in Oswego on cold autumn afternoons when the leaves were turning to red and yellow, and for miles they had scarcely spoken. With shame she remembered how she had secretly resented his crudeness. Now she was glad he hadn't changed, glad he was what he was, big and homely, glad even that he had freckles on his hands. The days came back to her when she used to go to see his father, who was secretly proud of Aleck, in spite of his opposition to Aleck's career, and who liked to make foolish jokes about Aleck's devotion to her. She realized bitterly her folly in having allowed even for so short a time Harrington Boyd's fine manner to weigh against Aleck's sturdy honesty. Even Aleck's suffering of the past year glorified him in her mind. Like him, many men had done wrong, but few had accepted the consequences so bravely! His letter to her announcing his marriage was the

best testimony he could have given of his almost childlike simplicity; he had none of the guile that had brought so much vexation into her own life. She forgot his duplicity with her before his marriage, or rather she considered that merely as a part of the fault he had already atoned for.

He was the only friend she had in London, and to him she turned in her loneliness and misery. She took from her desk a sheet of paper and wrote him a hasty note, telling of her visit at Broadoaks and of her return to London, ending with a promise to meet him at the National Gallery the next afternoon if her mother were well enough to be left alone. She added this condition on an impulse; it suddenly occurred to her that her mother, after the excitement of weeks of feverish activity, would probably have one of her reactions. When the reaction did come it would be violent.

Her fear proved prophetic, for the next morning Mrs. Wayne was in a raging fever. Dorothea became so alarmed that she sent Wood out for the physician who had attended the Spanish lodger a few weeks before. He was a portly figure of fifty with



a manner of alarming seriousness. After conferring with the invalid, he solemnly asked Dorothea if her mother had had a shock; then Dorothea proceeded to give a history of her mother's ailments and the doctor thoughtfully fingered his eyeglasses. On Dorothea's venturing to suggest that her mother had tired herself out and needed a rest, he lifted his eyes with a deprecating dubiousness. She conceived a great dislike for him and hoped that he wouldn't come again; but he did come the next day, and he came every other day for a week. During this time Dorothea did not once leave the lodgings, save for a short walk late in the afternoon of the fifth day. She had written to Aleck French of her mother's illness and promised to meet him when she could.

From the first day Mrs. Wayne sank into abject weakness and melancholy; her only interest in life centred in the question whether there were any mail. This Dorothea interpreted as a desire for news from Mrs. Follett Ladd.

When several days had passed and no news was received, Mrs. Wayne's melancholy deepened into nostalgia and Dorothea found herself



growing cynical. Mrs. Ladd had evidently lost interest in her friends from Oswego. Dorothea spoke to the doctor about her mother's homesickness and asked if it wouldn't be best for her to be taken on board the steamer. The doctor hesitated, then he conscientiously announced that the voyage and the sight of familiar places and faces would probably be beneficial to the sufferer. So Dorothea wrote for berths on the ship that sailed from Southampton the following Tuesday.

If she had examined her feelings she might have discovered that she herself, as well as her mother, was suffering from a disappointment; but at this time self-examination was just what she was careful to avoid. Sir Hubert was not a man to force himself on any one; her answer had been final, and he had sense and discretion enough to appreciate the fact. Two days before the day set for her departure she wrote to Aleck French that she would meet him at the National Gallery on Monday afternoon at three o'clock; now that her mother was about to go home, she seemed to be improving and could be safely left alone.

Dorothea found French in the columned por-

tico of the Gallery; he explained that he had been through all the rooms looking for her.

"Wouldn't you rather take a drive than go up there?" he said. "It's a pity not to be out such a fine day as this."

Dorothea suggested that they drive toward Hampstead and then walk; this would give them a chance to talk things over. On the way in the cab she was tempted to ask him about his wife; but she did not, and he had nothing to say on the subject. He did speak casually of Miss Flagler, whom he had seen several times in Paris. Arthur Roberts had told him that the engagement was not to be announced till after their return to New York; Roberts had been offered a position at the League; so they would be sure of an income.

"It's been a rather bad end to your summer, hasn't it?" he said.

"It has all been a disappointment, Aleck. I feel now as if I never wanted to see Europe again. It's only another ideal shattered."

He looked at her in surprise. "That doesn't sound like you, Dorothea."

"I'm afraid I've changed since I came over here," she said, with a smile.

When they reached Hampstead French

stopped the hansom and they walked in the direction of the Heath.

"So you're really going to-morrow?" he asked.

"Yes."

"I wish I were going with you."

For a moment Dorothea was silent. Then she said :

"Have you made up your mind to go back?"

He turned his face toward hers. "No. I couldn't make up my mind till I had spoken to you about it."

She felt her face flushing.

"I thought you had decided to come."

"I want to go—I want to go very much—now that other business has settled itself. I should like to see my father again. I should like to make it up with him."

"Yes, you ought to make it up with him," she repeated mechanically.

To-day he seemed to her bigger and cruder than he ever had been, and the gentleness of his manner with her contrasted oddly with the roughness of his looks. He reminded her of a great Newfoundland dog, especially when he looked down at her with his big eyes.

"Father was always fond of you," he went on. "He used to say you were the finest girl in Oswego. I believe it was you that made him send me over here."

Dorothea walked on without speaking.

A moment later, he resumed: "Perhaps I ought not to say what I'm going to say, Dorothea, but I just want you to know that I care for you more than ever, and if I could undo some time in the future what I've done, and be what I used to be to you—I'd do it, and I'd consider myself the luckiest man in the world. I don't ask you to marry me; I haven't any *right* to do that. But I think I shall always love you, Dorothea—I know I shall. And if you'll let me go back home and try to wipe out the past, I'll do my best to—to——"

Dorothea was holding down her head; so she could not see the expression of regret and yearning in his face. Before speaking she tried to formulate what she had to say, but she could not collect her thoughts.

"If you—if you ask me to—to promise anything," she replied incoherently, "Aleck——"

"I don't. I haven't any right to do that. If you told me that you loved some one else, or hated me, or didn't want me to be where you

were, I'd stay away, I'd stay over here—in London or Paris. I don't think I could bear to see you in love with any one else—or married. I'm not man enough for that. But if you——”

She looked up quickly into his face.

“I don't think I shall ever marry, Aleck, if you mean that,” she replied. “Perhaps I shall change my mind—many women say that—but I don't think I shall. I think you ought to go home. You ought to go home to your father, and you ought to stay at home. You belong there. We shall be good friends, Aleck, just as we used to be. Don't you think we ought to have stayed friends—just friends, I mean? That would have been better for both of us, it seems to me.”

He turned his head away and did not speak for several moments.

“I know you're right,” he said, about my going home. And I—I don't blame you. I think I'll probably do as you say. At any rate, I'll think about it.”

Then they talked of other things, chiefly about his work; he outlined plans for new pictures that he had in mind. Presently they turned and walked part way back to the lodgings, and then took a hansom. To French's re-



quest that he might see her off the next day, Dorothea replied that her mother was so ill, perhaps it would be better for him not to come. Although a rather lame reason, it satisfied him, and he bade her good-bye, saying that he might see her in Oswego before very long.

## XX.

ON entering the hall of the lodgings Dorothea was surprised to hear her mother's voice coming from the drawing room. She opened the door quickly, and her heart gave a wild jump; Sir Hubert Downes was standing there, engaged in conversation with the invalid, who had changed her nightdress for one of her finest gowns. For a moment there was a tableau. On seeing Dorothea Sir Hubert had risen; now he stood returning the look of mingled surprise and pleasure with which Dorothea was regarding him. It was Mrs. Wayne who broke the silence.

"Sir Hubert has been waiting for you for more than an hour."

Dorothea extended her hand, and he seized it with a fervour that made her face burn.

"I am glad to see you," she said quietly.

"Thank you."

He stood smiling, and waiting for her to sit down.

"I suppose you're surprised to find me up?" Mrs. Wayne went on, turning to her daughter. She displayed a restless energy; her cheeks, which early in the afternoon were of a yellowish pallor, were now shot with pink, and her dull eyes shone. "But I couldn't let Sir Hubert sit here all alone. He came about an hour after you left. We've been having a long talk. I've just been telling him he's done me more good than all the doctors in creation could have done."

Dorothea had taken off her gloves and allowed her wrap to fall upon the couch.

"Here, give me those things," her mother went on, extending both hands, "I'll leave them in your room. Sir Hubert wants to talk with you. I guess he's had enough of me for a while. Perhaps"—she added at the door—"perhaps you can persuade him to stay for dinner. He wouldn't promise *me*. I suppose he thought you might not come and he'd have to take dinner all alone with me."

She went away laughing hysterically at her silly joke; she seemed almost beside herself with joy. She felt that she was about

to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat, and the prospect intoxicated her.

Dorothea, whose heart was beating violently, closed the door, left half open; then, ashamed of having closed it, she had an impulse to turn back. But she resisted, and took the chair that her mother vacated. She hardly dared to look Sir Hubert in the face; her chief thought was to control herself, to keep her voice from trembling. But the silence was so long that she lifted her eyes at last, and tried to formulate a remark.

"I hope your mother is very well," she said.

"Yes, thank you—that is——" he stammered. Then he stopped for a moment. "No, the fact is," he went on slowly, "she hasn't been well since you left. She's very delicate, you know, though she doesn't seem so, and I think your little accident upset her."

"I'm very sorry. But she hasn't been ill, I hope?"

"Not really; only a bit out of sorts."

"And the Ladds—are they still with you?" Dorothea asked, to keep up the conversation.

"They left this morning. Boyd left three

days ago. So we're quite alone, my mother and I."

Another silence fell upon them. Dorothea could think of nothing to say. Her mind ran over a series of irrelevant topics. At last she decided that it would be safe to mention her departure the next day.

"I suppose my mother has told you about our leaving."

"Yes, and it made me realize how lucky I was to come to-day. I might have missed you. I thought you'd be here for some time longer."

For a moment he seemed to be gathering himself together for a great effort. Then he burst out:

"I've been telling your mother what I came for. I've made a clean breast of it to her, and——" He stopped and looked into her face. "It's about that fellow, Boyd," he went on. "I know what he said about you, and why you left our house so suddenly. And—I've—I've—come to tell you how sorry I am, and how—how indignant my mother and I are that you should have been insulted under our roof. If you could have told us—but, of course, you couldn't do that



—but if we could have known about it, we should have protected you from any further annoyance.”

At first Dorothea was bewildered by his incoherence; but after a moment she gasped:

“Then my mother has told you!”

“It was Mrs. Ladd who first told. She told my mother last night. My poor old mother had been worrying about me; you know I haven’t any secrets from her, and she knew how—how cut up I’d been when you—when you told me that you couldn’t care for me as I did for you. I suppose Mrs. Ladd saw it too, she’s so keen. At any rate, last night Mrs. Ladd had a long talk with my mother, and they spoke about you. Mother had been a little hurt by— But that was because she couldn’t understand, you know, why every one didn’t admire me as she does. I suppose all mothers are like that. Then Mrs. Ladd spoke up for you, and she told us what Boyd said about you on the veranda of the studio. This morning my mother told me, and then I took the train for London and came here.”

He looked confused after his long speech, and sat gazing in Dorothea’s face.

“I’m sorry you’ve come so far to tell me

this," said Dorothea. "You weren't in any way to blame, and, of course, I've never blamed you for a moment."

"But you ran away from us; you treated us as if you thought we'd believe that man's insinuations. You see, I've found out all about it. Your mother has told me what Mrs. Ladd didn't tell," he added, with a faint smile.

"I did what I had to do, what any one with the least self-respect would have done in my place."

"But you might have trusted us more," he said reproachfully.

"How did Mrs. Ladd know?" Dorothea asked. "It isn't possible that Mr. Boyd told her."

For a moment, Sir Hubert looked confused again.

"That was one reason why she hadn't spoken before. She felt as if it would be dishonourable. She overheard accidentally."

"Then she was in the studio at the time," said Dorothea. "I remember that I thought I heard a noise there."

"She didn't have time to show herself before it was all over. Of course, she couldn't have helped hearing, and it was only—only what my

mother said to her that made her see that she ought to tell. In fact, she asked my mother if I hadn't proposed to you, and when my mother said I had, she couldn't keep silent any longer."

In spite of herself, Dorothea smiled at Sir Hubert's earnestness in trying not to incriminate any one save the real culprit.

"It's all over now," she said.

Sir Hubert's eyes flashed. "I should like nothing better than to give that fellow a sound thrashing."

"The best thing to do is to forget all about it," said Dorothea.

"It made me wonder," he went on confusedly; "in fact, that's what I really came here for—to find out if that was why you discouraged me so. Of course, I have no reason to think you really could care for me, but if it hadn't happened you might perhaps have given me a chance."

"I couldn't do anything except what I did do under the circumstances," Dorothea replied, her face flaming. "I should have been the most contemptible creature in the world if I had."

"Because that man said those things about you?"

"No, not that. But because he made me realize that they were true."

"True?" Sir Hubert gasped.

"Yes, true—that is, true enough to make me despise myself for going to Broadoaks, for accepting your kindness when, if I had allowed myself to think, I should have known why Mrs. Ladd had introduced me to you, and why she had persuaded your mother to invite me. Oh, I don't blame *her*. She simply has a weakness for managing——"

"But my mother invited you of her own accord," Sir Hubert interrupted, with a look of bewilderment and pain in his eyes. "No, not exactly that. She invited you because I asked her to."

"You asked her to?"

"Yes. Mrs. Ladd had nothing whatever to do with it. Even if she had I should be the last person to blame her."

"But I thought when I went there—oh, I ought not to have gone. I went because I knew it would please my mother."

"Then you didn't want to come?"

"Yes, I did want to come, too," she acknowledged, seeing how rude her remark had been. "I didn't mean that—what you think. I allowed

myself to drift. It was only after Mr. Boyd said those things about me that I understood what I had done, what an odious position I had placed myself in."

"But that was the merest fancy. It's only because you're so sensitive that you've accused yourself."

Tears had come into her eyes and she turned her head away to hide them.

"You're very generous," she said.

"I'm generous to myself," he replied, with a smile. "But I'm glad you think I'm generous. That gives me courage to ask you—if what happened the day you left us had anything to do with your saying you never could care for me."

For a moment she did not reply. Then she said:

"Yes; that was one of the reasons—if—if that was what I said."

She could not see the light that leaped into his eyes.

"Perhaps I can get over the others some day. Won't you tell me what they are?"

"I didn't know my own mind. I felt confused and ashamed. I was afraid of doing anything that might be considered underhanded or



—or indelicate—anything I might be sorry for afterward.”

“But if that’s all, surely now, after what I’ve said, you can’t feel like that. You know, I didn’t expect very much. I only wanted you to know how much I loved you, and I thought that perhaps some time you might learn to care for me. But, of course, if there’s some one else——”

“There’s no one else.”

“Of course, you hardly know me now,” he stammered.

“You don’t know *me*,” said Dorothea, with a smile.

“I know that I love you,” he replied.  
“That’s enough.”

A moment later he went on:

“And will you let me come to see you?”

“We are leaving for America to-morrow,” Dorothea repeated.

“I know that, but I can leave for America, too. I think I’ve told you that I’ve been on the point of going for years. I can’t go to-morrow. I shouldn’t like to leave my mother so suddenly. Then, if I wait a week or two, perhaps I shall be able to persuade her to come with me. Will you let me come?”

His deep eyes were fixed upon her, and she

felt a thrill of happiness that she had never known. It was a long time before she could trust herself to speak.

"Yes, you may come," she said, at last.

He extended his hand impulsively, and held hers for a moment.

"Thank you," said he.

She rose and started for the door.

"Shall I tell mother you are going to stay for dinner?"

"If you want me to," he replied, smiling.

For a few moments she left him. When she returned he thought she had been crying. But there were no tears in Mrs. Wayne's eyes. As she entered the room she felt as if she were receiving her reward for years of maternal devotion.

THE END.



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